MATERIALS

FOR THE STUDY OF THE

EARLY HISTORY OF THE VAISHNAVA SECT

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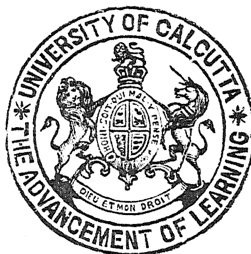
for the study of the

Early History of the Vaishnava Sect

By

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To

THE HON'BLE SIR ASUTOSH MOOKERJEE,

Kt., C.S.I., M.A., D.L., D.Sc., Ph.D.,

who has raised the Calcutta University

to an eminence

which recalls the palmiest days of

Takshasila and Nalanda,

these Lectures

are humbly dedicated by the Author,

in token of profound admiration and reverence.

PREFACE

The following pages contain a general summary of a course of lectures on the Early History of the Bhāgavata-Vaishṇava sect which I, in the capacity of a Post-Graduate teacher of Ancient Indian History and Culture, delivered to my students during the last session (1918-19).

The plan and purpose of the lectures are stated at length in the Foreword, and they need no further comment in the Preface. But it may not be out of place to draw the attention of the reader to just one or two points which ought to be borne in mind in reading through the book.

First, it has not been my intention to write an exhaustive treatise on Early Vaishṇavism. I have been chiefly concerned to indicate the lines on which the future studies in the subject ought to proceed in order to form a clear idea of the development of the different aspects of the Vaishṇava religion and philosophy around the historical nucleus as supplied by the life and teaching of Vāsudeva Krishṇa whose personality in its varied conception has been at the back of the religious aspirations of multitudinous sections of the Hindu community. In other words, I have endeavoured to show that the huge fabric of the Vaishṇava religion of love and devotion was not based upon a mythical fancy of the poets, but has a truth in the personal history of Vāsudeva Krishṇa which has been overshadowed by the stupendous growth of legends both highly poetic and pastoral.

Secondly, I have to confess that I have not been able to utilise fully the evidence of all the ancient Jaina and

Buddhist records. The first Jaina Upāṅga called the Aupapātika Sūtra, edited by Dr. Ernst Leumann, mentions (p. 61) Baladevā and Vāsudevā, and cites (pp. 69-70) two ancient ślokas where eight Kshatriya teachers are mentioned, sharply distinguished from eight Brāhmaṇa "parivvāyā." Among the former we find the name of Bala Rāma. The ślokas containing the lists of teachers are given below:—

"*tattha khalu ime aṭṭha māhaṇa-parivvāyā bhavanti, taṁ jahā:*

Kaṇṇe ya Karakaṇṭe ya
Ambaḍe ya Parāsare
Kaṇhe Dīvāyaṇe ceva
Devagutte ya Nārae;

tattha khalu ime aṭṭha Khattiya-parivvāyā bhavanti, taṁ jahā:

Sīlaī Masiṁhāre
Naggaī Bhaggaī ti ya
Videhe rāyā Rāme Bale ti ya;"

As my friend and colleague Dr. B. M. Barua informs me, Sir R. G. Bhandarkar's reference to the Niddesa needs a word of explanation since there are two separate canonical commentaries, namely, the Chulla and Mahā Niddesas, included under one name, *i.e.*, Niddesa. Of the two Niddesas the former is undoubtedly older than the latter, and the older one is probably pre-Aśokan in date. The list of different religious sects both Brāhmaṇical, and non-Brāhmaṇical, quoted by Sir R. G. Bhandarkar, occurs in identical form in both the commentaries. Comparing the Aṅguttara list of sectaries (Aṅguttara Nikāya, iii, pp. 276-277) with the Niddesa list (Chulla Niddesa, pp. 173-174) which omits some names of the former

and supplements it with other names, including those of Vāsudevavatikā and Baladevavatikā one may be led to suppose that the sects whose names are not to be found in the Aṅguttara list did not exist when it was drawn up. But a deeper consideration will show that such a supposition is wrong. The Aṅguttara list was drawn up at a time when Buddhism was still a local movement confined to Kosala and the eastern provinces. On the other hand, the Niddesa list originated among the followers of Mahā Kachchāyana who was the first among the chief disciples of Śākyamuni through whose agency Buddhism gained ground in the Mathurā region (*vide* the Madhura Sutta of the Majjhima Nikāya), the district which I have specified as the first centre of the Bhāgavata movement.

I have next to call attention to the fact that Bhāgavatism, like the religions of Mahāvīra and Buddha, was the expression of a natural reaction from the sacrifice-ridden religion of the Brāhmaṇic period. The earliest teachers of this faith, while refraining from an open denunciation of the Vidhi Yajña or the ordinary Vedic sacrifice, propounded a new doctrine which laid emphasis, among other things, on Ahiṁsā. The new faith finally coalesced with a few Brāhmaṇical and popular cults to form the great federation of religions known as Vaishṇavism. The agencies employed in effecting this union were the following :—

(*i*) The Vyūha doctrine in virtue of which Vāsudevism united with Saṅkarshaṇa worship to form Bhāgavatism. (*ii*) The doctrine of Avatāra which effected a synthesis between Bhāgavatism and the cult of Vishṇu-Nārāyaṇa and gave birth to Vaishṇavism. (*iii*) The Purusha-Prakriti theory in virtue of which the cult of Śrī was engrafted on Vaishṇavism. Just as the reaction against the old Vedic sacrifices gave birth to the intellectual movement of the Upanishadic Rishis and the religious movement of

Krishṇa Vāsudeva, so the attempted revival of the Karma-Kāṇḍa by the Pūrvamīmāṁsā school was followed by the neo-Vedāntic movement of Śaṅkarāchārya and the neo-Bhāgavatism of the Śrī Vaishṇava saints.

Lastly, I have to say a word about the system of transliteration adopted in the following pages. The system followed is substantially the same as used in the Indian Antiquary. In quotations, however, the original spelling of proper names has usually been retained.

I do not find words adequately to express my gratitude to the Hon'ble Sir Asutosh Mookerjee, President of the Council of Post-Graduate Teaching in Arts, who has never failed in the midst of his many onerous duties to take interest in the progress of the work.

Among my colleagues Dr. Barua and Mr. Chanda have placed me under deep obligation, the former by revising the proofs and offering some valuable suggestions, the latter by permitting me to make use of the Mathurā Bhāgavata Inscription of the time of Śoḍāsa. The credit of discovering the name of Vāsudeva in the China inscription of Yajñaśrī belongs to my pupil Mr. N. G. Majumdar. The indexes have been prepared by Messrs. H. C. Roy and P. C. Bagchi, my pupils.

January, 2, 1920. H. C. RAYCHAUDHURI.

ABBREVIATIONS

Ait. Āraṇyaka...	Aitareya Āraṇyaka.
Ait. Br. ...	Aitareya Brāhmaṇa.
As. Res ...	Asiatic Researches.
Bh. Purāṇa ...	Bhāgavata Purāṇa.
Chh. Up. ...	Chhāndogya Upanishad.
E. H. I. ...	Early History of India, V. A. Smith.
E. H. D. ...	Early History of the Dekkan, Sir R. G. Bhandarkar.
Ep. Ind. ...	Epigraphia Indica.
G. E. I. ...	The Great Epic of India, Hopkins.
Hist. Sans. Lit.	History of Sanskrit Literature, Macdonell.
Ind. Ant. ...	Indian Antiquary.
Ind. Lit. ...	Indian Literature, Weber.
J. R. A. S. ...	Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society.
Kaush. Br. ...	Kaushītaki Brāhmaṇa.
Mbh. ...	Mahābhārata.
R. I. ...	Religions of India, Barth. Religions of India, Hopkins.
R. V. ...	Rigveda Saṁhitā.
Saddharma ...	Saddharmapuṇḍarīka.
Śat. Br. ...	Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa.
S. B. E. ...	Sacred Books of the East, Max Müller.
T. A. ...	Taittirīya Āraṇyaka.
T. B. ...	Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa.

CONTENTS

Early History of the Vaishnava Sect

FOREWORD

"The most important branch of Indian history," says Mr. Vincent Smith, "is the history of her thought." "The soul of Hindu Civilisation," says C. N. Krishna Swami Aiyar, "is at once made out to be in the religious history of India. The history of religion in India has a much larger meaning than it can have in connection with the civilisation of any other country or nationality." Hitherto the attention of Indologists has been mainly engrossed by the mighty religious movements associated with the names of Mahāvīra the Jina and Gautama the Buddha. Vaishṇavism and other orthodox Indian creeds have received but scant attention at the hands of scientific historians. The prevailing ignorance with regard to Vaishṇavism is reflected in such a widely read book of reference as Chambers's Twentieth Century Dictionary where Krishṇa is described as "a deity in later Hindu Mythology." Whatever be the right kind of test in determining the importance of a religious system—the amount of the following, or the intrinsic worth of the system—Vaishṇavism must be regarded as one of the most important religions of India. It was the religion of Heliodoros, of the Gupta Emperors, of Rāmānuja, of Kavīra, of Chaitanya and of Tukārāma. It still counts as its votaries many among the teeming millions of India. It is the religion which produced the *Bhagavadgītā*, the songs of the

Tāmil *Ālwārs*, the splendid *Padāvalīs* of mediæval Bengal, and the *Rāmacharitamānas* of Tulasī Dās. If Sir George Grierson is right India owes the preservation of the ideas of *Bhakti* and *Prasāda* (faith and divine grace) to the Vaishṇavas. Any endeavour which is meant to throw light on the story of the rise and expansion of this important religion cannot but be of great use in reconstructing the history of our country. In his introduction to the *Sūtras* of Āpastamba (*p., xxix, n.*) Dr. Bühler observes, "the earlier history of the Purāṇas, which as yet is a mystery, will only be cleared up when a real history of the orthodox Hindu sects, especially of the Śivites and Vishṇuites has been written." I have tried to present the materials for a connected history of Vaishṇavism from the Vedic times to the age of the early Tāmil *Āchāryas* who laid the foundation of the *Śrī Vaishṇava* school of which the greatest exponent was Rāmānuja, the earliest of the celebrated mediæval Bhakti Reformers of India.

Valuable information regarding this faith has been supplied by several eminent scholars, Western as well as Indian, *e.g.*, Jones, Colebrooke, Weber, Lorinser, Lassen, Muir, Bühler, Barth, Hopkins, Grierson, Garbe, Niveditā, Macnicol, Keith, Telang, Bhandarkar, Sukhtankar, T. Rājagopāla Chāriar, K. Aiyangar, Govindāchārya Swāmin, Dr. Seal, Bankimchandra and others. I have consulted their works and the following books and journals, *viz.* :— the *Rig Veda*, the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, the *Chhāndogya Upanishad*, the *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka*, the *Ashtādhyāyī* of *Pāṇini*, the *Mahābhārata*, the *Matsya*, *Vāyu*, *Vishṇu* and *Bhāgavata Purāṇas*, the *Buddhist Suttas* and *Jātakas*, the works of Aśvaghosha, the *Jaina Sūtras*, the Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, the Vienna Oriental Journal, the Indian Antiquary, the Epigraphia Indica, the Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum,

Macdonell and Keith's Vedic Index, Sorrensen's Index of Names in the Mahābhārata and numerous other works, full references to which will be found in the following pages. In preparing these lectures I have been mainly guided by the evidence of archæology, remembering the famous dictum of Colebrooke (Essays, Vol. II, p. 213): "In the scarcity of authentic materials for the ancient, and even for the modern, history of the Hindu race, importance is justly attached to all genuine monuments and especially inscriptions on stone and metal." I have also made use of literature to which an early date can be assigned, and which is comparatively free from late interpolations, *viz.*, (*i*) Pre-Buddhistic Vedic literature, (*ii*) ancient work to which a definite date can be assigned, *e.g.*, the Artha-Śāstra of Kauṭilya, the Mahābhāshya of Patañjali, the Indika of Megasthenes, the works of Aśvaghosha, etc., and (*iii*) works on Vāsudeva free from any Vaishṇava bias, *e.g.*, the Ghata Jātaka and the Uttarādhyayana Sūtra. The epics and the Purāṇas have been utilised very sparingly because of the numerous interpolations they contain and the uncertainty of their chronology.

In my first lecture I have tried to draw a distinction between the worship of Urukrama-Vishṇu which is as old as the Rig Veda, and the Bhakti religion we call Vaishṇavism. I have then tried to show that this Bhakti religion is not a plagiarism from Christianity, but owes its origin to Vāsudeva.

I have next tried to prove the correctness of the tradition that the true Vāsudeva was Krishṇa, the famous prince of the Vrishṇi family of Mathurā. In doing this I have attempted to refute the following theories, *viz.* :—

(1) That the true Vāsudeva, *i.e.*, the originator of Bhāgavatism, was not the Kshatriya prince Krishṇa, the son of Vasudeva.

(2) That Vāsudeva, though a Kshatriya prince, is not to be identified with Krishṇa.

(3) That Vāsudeva-Krishṇa was a solar deity.

(4) That Vāsudeva-Krishṇa was a tribal god.

(5) That Vāsudeva-Krishṇa was a vegetation deity.

In my second lecture I have attempted to reconstruct the true history of the life of Vāsudeva-Krishṇa from such historical data as are available, and have pointed out that he came into contact with Solar worship, and the doctrines which he learnt from a Solar priest were the foundations on which the superstructure of Bhāgavatism was raised. I have then told the story of the spread of the new faith from its cradle in the valley of the Jumna. I have tried to show that the earlier Brāhmaṇical attitude towards the faith was one of hostility, but later on there was a combination between Brāhmaṇism and Bhāgavatism probably owing to the Buddhist propaganda of the Mauryas. As a result of this alliance Vāsudeva was identified with the Brāhmaṇic gods, Nārāyaṇa and Vishṇu.

In my third lecture I have discussed the question of the relation of Bhāgavatism to the following non-Brāhmaṇical creeds, *viz.*, Ājīvikism, Jainism, Buddhism and Christianity.

In my fourth lecture I have traced the fortunes of the Bhāgavata religion from the first century A.D. to the time of the Tamil *Āchāryas*. I have suggested that the Śaka and Kushān sovereigns of Northern India were generally hostile towards the religion of Vāsudeva and it was this anti-Bhāgavata attitude which probably brought the foreign kings into conflict with the Vaishṇava monarchs Chandra, and the imperial Guptas. The Guptas did for Bhāgavatism what Aśoka had done for Buddhism. With the fall of the Guptas and the coming of the Huns

Bhāgavatism lost its predominance in Northern India, but it flourished in the Tāmil country and finally Rāmānuja and his followers restored it to the position it held under the Guptas.

LECTURE I

VAISHṆAVISM AND VĀSUDEVA

Vaishṇavism is the name given to the Bhakti religion which recognises Vishṇu, also called *Bhagavat*, *Nārāyaṇa*, *Hari* as the sole God. He is defined as the Unborn (*Aja*), and the Eternal (*Śāśvata*). He is the Creator (*Dhātā*), the embodiment of Immortality (*Amritam*), the Father and the Mother and the Eternal Preceptor of the universe :—

Pitā mātā cha sarvasya
Jagataḥ śāśvato guruḥ.

Mbh. edited by P. Tarkaratna, xii, 334, 27.

As occasion demands, from time to time in His infinite grace He Himself becomes incarnate to relieve the world from sin, or His followers from trouble. The most perfect incarnations are those of Rāma Dāśarathi and Krishṇa Vāsudeva.

Vishṇu worship is as old as the Rig Veda. Vishṇu is, as is well known, one of the Ādityas or manifestations of the sun. (See Wilson's introduction to the Rig Veda Saṁhitā p. 20; and Bhagavadgītā, x, 21). He represents the sun in its daily and yearly course. (Haug's translation of the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa, p. 1, n.) His fame rests on the three strides with which he crosses heaven :—

Trīṇipadā vichakrame Vishṇurgopā adābhyaḥ.

(Rig Veda, I, 22, 18.)

Three steps he made, the herdsman sure,
Vishṇu, and stepped across (the world)

Hopkins, "The Religions of India," p. 57.

"There can be little doubt," says Wilson, "that the three steps here referred to are the three periods of the sun's course—his rise, culmination and setting." It is expressly so stated by Durgāchārya in his commentary on the Nirukta. (Wilson's Introduction to the Rig Veda Saṁhitā, pp. 25-26. *Cf.* also Haug's Ait. Br., p. 4, n.). Mr. Jayaswāl says (Ind. Ant., 1918, March, p. 84) that Aurṇavābha takes the verse "*idam Vishṇur vichakrame tredhā nidadhe padam*" in the sense that Vishṇu literally and physically in the past stepped over the earth, horizon and sky and "in ascending (he stepped) at the Vishṇupada on the Gayā peak."

Colebrooke thought that the taking of three steps might have formed the groundwork of the Paurāṇik legend of the Dwarf Avatāra. Wilson remarks: "It might have been suggestive of the fiction; but no allusion to the notion of Avatāras occurs in the Veda."

In one Rigvedic passage Vishṇu is called the germ of the sacrifice—*Ritasya garbham* (I, 156, 3) ('Rita' may mean also 'order.'). He also figures in the Veda as a leader in battle. He is specially praised with Indra, the two being looked upon as masters of the world (vi, 69; vii, 99). His greatness is inconceivable, and he is revered under the title *Śipivishṭa* (vii, 100, 5-6) meaning literally 'bald.' He has three spaces, two called earthly, and one, the highest known only to himself (i, 155, 5). Vishṇu's highest place is the realm of the departed spirits (i, 154, 5-6). His later popularity, according to Hopkins, lies in the importance of his "highest place" being the home of the departed spirits, where he himself dwells, inscrutable.

It is clear that Vishṇu was a great god even in the earliest Vedic times. But he was not regarded by anybody as the Sole God, or even as the greatest God. His

inferiority to Indra appears even in the hymns devoted to his own glorification, and nothing better is said of him, in Rig Veda, i, 22, 19, than that "he is the worthy friend of Indra—*Indrasya Yujyaḥ Sakhā*." He is also ordered about by Indra (iv, 18, 11; viii, 89, 12):—

"His mother inquired of the mighty Indra, 'have these deities deserted thee, my son?' then Indra said, 'Vishṇu, my friend, (if thou) purpose slaying Vritra, exert thy greatest prowess.'" (M. N. Dutt Śāstrī's translation of the Rig Veda Saṁhitā, p. 759.) 'Vishṇu strode his three steps by the energy of Indra (Rig Veda, viii, 12, 27).

In the later Vedic literature the position of Vishṇu becomes more prominent. In the philosophy of the Taittirīya Saṁhitā the three places of Vishṇu are not, as in the Rig Veda, the two points of the horizon and the zenith, but the earth, air, and the sky (Hopkins, the Religions of India, p. 460).

The Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa relates with great fullness of detail the legend regarding the 'three strides.' It further represents Vishṇu as the personification of sacrifice. We have already seen that as early as the Rigvedic age he was called the 'germ of the sacrifice.' "Vishṇu truly is the sacrifice, by striding (*vi-kram*) he obtained for the gods that all pervading power (*Vikrānti*) which now belongs to them. By his first step he gained this same (earth), by the second this aerial expanse, and by his last (step) the sky. And this same pervading power Vishṇu, as the sacrifice, obtains by his strides for him (the sacrificer). For this reason he strides the Vishṇu-strides." (Śat. Br., Part I, 9. 3. 9; Eggeling's translation of the Śat. Br., Part I, p. 268).

The fourteenth Kāṇḍa of this Brāhmaṇa, at the beginning of its first part contains a legend of a contention

among the gods, in which Vishṇu came off victorious, whence it became customary to say, "Vishṇu is the most excellent of the gods." The gods sent forth ants to gnaw the bowstring of Vishṇu, who stood, resting his head on the end of the bow ; the string snapping and springing upwards severed his head from his body. The head fell with (the sound) 'ghriu' ; and on falling it became yonder sun. (Eggeling's translation of the Śat. Br., Part V, pp. 441-442, and Weber's History of Indian Literature, pp. 126-127).

The same legend recurs in a passage of the Taittirīya Āraṇyaka (v, 1), and also in the Pañchaviṁśa Brāhmaṇa, vii, 5, 6.

We find the name Nārāyaṇa for the first time in the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa, but it is not in any way connected with Vishṇu. It is in the Taittirīya Āraṇyaka that it is brought into direct relation to Vishṇu.

The prominent position held by Vishṇu in the Brāhmaṇic period is also manifest in the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa where he is said to occupy the highest place among the gods (*Agnirvaidevānāmavamo Vishṇuḥ paramaḥ*—Ait. Br., 1,1.). He is one of the '*Dīkshāpālau*'—the two guardians of the 'dīkshā' or initiation (i, 4). He protects the defects in the sacrifice (from producing any evil consequences), while Varuṇa protects the fruits arising from its successful performance (iii. 38, Haug's translation, pp. 227-228) Vishṇu also figures in this work as a helper of Indra against the Asuras. "The Asuras after having been turned out, entered the Śastra of the Achchhāvāka. Indra said, "Who will join me, that we both turn out the Asuras from here?" Vishṇu answered, "I (will join you)." Indra and Vishṇu then turned the Asuras out (iii, 50 ; Haug's translation, p. 254).

"Although Vishṇu came to be looked upon by some as 'the most excellent of the gods," he was, even now, far from being regarded by any section of the Aryan people as the One God. His pre-eminence among the gods is not always apparent and in a passage of the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa he is called *Devānām dvārapaḥ* (i, 30)—the door-keeper of the gods, not a very complimentary epithet for the 'highest' among the gods. Again, we have no evidence of the existence of a Vaishṇava sect in these early times. The sectarian name Vaishṇava is met with only in the latest portion of the Mahābhārata (xviii, 6, 97) :—

Ashṭādaśa purāṇānām śravaṇād yat phalam bhavet
Tat phalam samavāpnoti Vaishṇavonātra saṁśayaḥ.

We should also note another important fact, namely, that there is very little inner connection between Vedic and Brāhmaṇic Vishṇu-worship and the Bhakti religion we call Vaishṇavism. The idea of a God of Grace, the doctrine of Bhakti—these are the fundamental tenets of the religion termed Vaishṇavism. But they are not very conspicuous in Vedic and Brāhmaṇic Vishṇu-worship. Vishṇu in the Brāhmaṇic texts is more intimately connected with 'yajña' than with Bhakti or Prasāda. It is in the hymns addressed to Varuṇa, and not in those addressed to Vishṇu, that we find a feeling which bears some resemblance to the Vaishṇava Bhakti. (Ind. Ant., 1908, p. 259 ; J. R. A. S., 1915, p. 834 ; Macnicol's Indian Theism, p. 10.)

Dr. Macnicol, indeed, sees some hints in the Brāhmaṇa literature of the progress which Vishṇu was making behind the screen of Brāhmaṇic ritual, to the position he has held so long as the Supreme God of those in India whose hearts are filled with bhakti (Indian Theism, p. 30). But these hints are extremely dubious. Dr. Keith rightly

observes (J. R. A. S., 1915, p. 839); "That the Brāhmaṇas treat Vishṇu as identical with the sacrifice and ask him to make good its defects do not show that he was 'on his way to his place as the God of the worship of men's hearts,' or 'was recognised in his aspect of grace as a saviour.'" If the Vedic or Brāhmaṇic accounts of Vishṇu worship do not furnish any clue to the origin of Vaishṇavism as we know it, what is its source?

In the opinion of several scholars this Bhakti Religion was of foreign origin, and was preached in India for the first time by Rāmānuja. "There has been considerable mis-impression," says S. Krishnaswami Aiyangar in his Śri Rāmānujāchārya, p. 2, "that the Vaishṇava movement originated in Rāmānuja. On the basis of this mis-impression, theories have been built up time and again that the characteristic features of the spècial teachings of Rāmānuja have been borrowed from Christianity." Dr. Keith observes in J. R. A. S., 1915, pp. 836-837: "The first great theistic movement of India is that of Rāmānuja ....But precisely at this point we are met with the fact that Christian religious influences are possible and even probable."

Mr. Aiyangar rightly considers the hypothesis of a plagiarism from Christianity to be an error which arises from not giving due weight to the indebtedness of Rāmānuja to those Tāmil Saints that had gone before him ere he came into the world. The Tāmil Saints to whom Mr. Aiyangar refers are the Āchāryas Nāthamuni and Ālvandār (Yamunāchārya) and their precursors the Ālwārs (Srī Rāmānujāchārya, p. 4).

Rāmānuja begins his Vedārtha Saṁgraha as well as his commentary on the Bhagavadgītā by paying his tribute of respect to Yamunāchārya. A work of the latter, the

Siddhitraya, is frequently quoted in Rāmānuja's works, and Rāmānuja generally follows the same lines of argument as we find in Yamunā's work (V. A. Sukhtankar's "Teachings of Vedānta according to Rāmānuja," The Vienna Oriental Journal, Vol. 22, 1908, pp. 121-122). Yamunāchārya in his turn was the spiritual successor of his grandfather Nāthamuni, the author of the *Nyāya Tattva* "an elaborate treatise covering the whole field of philosophy from the point of view of the Rāmānuja school." (T. Rājagopāla Chariar's "The Vaishṇavite Reformers of India," p. 4). Nāthamuni again got his inspiration from the songs of the Ālwārs, especially from those of Saint Satagopa (op. cit. pp. 2-3). The Ālwārs were saints or Bhaktas of various castes, who by their Tāmil songs inculcated Bhakti and Krishṇa-worship mainly (op. cit. p. 138). The Bhagavadgītā was well known to them and the Bhāgavata in some form also. "It seems reasonable to conclude," says Mr. T. Rājagopāl Chariar, "that these Ālwārs or the earlier of them were offshoots of the northern Bhāgavatas." Colebrooke gives an account of the Bhāgavatas in his Miscellaneous Essays, Vol. I, pp. 437-443. The synonymy of the Bhāgavata sect is thus given in the *Padma Tantra* (one of the 108 Tantras or Saṁhitās):—

Suris Suhrid bhāgavatas Sātvataḥ pañchakāla-vit
Ekāntikas tanmayaś cha pañcharātrika ityapi.

(J.R.A.S., 1911, p. 935.)

The Bhāgavata, Sātvata, Ekāntika or Pañcharātra religion is referred to in the Nārāyaṇīya section of the Śāntiparva of the Mahābhārata :—

Yadā Bhāgavato' tyarthamāsīdrājā mahān Vasuḥ
Mbh., xii, 337, 1.

Sātvatam Vidhimāsthāya prāksūryamukha niḥsritam
Mbh., xii, 335, 19.

Nūnam Ekāntadharmo'yam śreshtho Nārāyaṇapriyaḥ
Mbh., xii, 348, 4.
Pañcharātra vidomukhyāstasya gehemahātmanaḥ
Mbh., xii, 235, 25.

According to the Mahābhārata (xii, 346, 10-11), this religion was obtained by Nārada from Nārāyaṇa Himself. "It has once before been concisely told in the *Harigītā* (that is, the Bhagavadgītā)." In another passage, in reply to Janamejaya's question "who taught it first?" Vaiśampāyana says "it was told by the Adorable Himself to Arjuna" (*i.e.*, in the Bhagavadgītā). (Mbh., xii, 348, 6-8.)

The date of the Bhagavadgītā or of the Nārāyaṇiya is uncertain, but we have epigraphic evidence of the existence of the Bhāgavata or Bhakti school long before the beginning of the Christian era. (See The Indian Antiquary, 1912, p. 13.)

The Besnagar Inscription[1] of the second century B.C. mentions the erection of a flagstaff with an image of Garuḍa at the top in honour of Vāsudeva by Heliodora, an ambassador of the Greek king Antialkidas, who was a Bhāgavata. The Ghasundi Inscription[2] engraved a little earlier speaks of a pūjā stone wall for the worship of Bhagavat Saṅkarshaṇa and Vāsudeva. A third inscription of the first century B.C. existing at Nānāghāt[3] contains an adoration of Saṅkarshaṇa and Vāsudeva.

These epigraphic records show clearly that the Bhāgavatas were the Bhaktas of Vāsudeva. This fact enables us to trace back the existence of the sect to the age of Pāṇini for we must recognise in the Vāsudevakas of that grammarian the forerunners of the Bhāgavatas of the second century B.C.

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1 Lüders, Ins. No. 669 (Epigraphia Indica, Vol. X, Appendix).
2 Lüders, Ins. No. 6.
3 Lüders, Ins. No. 1112.

In the sūtra, iv, 3, 95 Pāṇini says that an affix comes after a word in the first case in construction in the sense of "this is his object of Bhakti." Then in a succeeding sūtra iv, 3, 98 he says that the affix 'Vun' comes in the sense of "this is his object of Bhakti" after the words Vāsudeva and Arjuna. Thus Vāsudevaka = a person the object of whose Bhakti is Vāsudeva. To this word we may compare the word Gotamaka = a follower of Gotama (Rhys Davids, Dialogues of the Buddha, I, pp. 220-222; Buddhist India, p. 145).

It is agreed on all hands that Pāṇini flourished before Patañjali (second century B.C.; for references see V. A. Smith's E.H.I., 3rd Edition, p. 214) who wrote the great commentary (Mahābhāshya) on his sūtras.

But the exact date of this prince of grammarians is uncertain. According to Hopkins (The Great Epic of India, p. 391) "no evidence has yet been brought forward to show conclusively that Pāṇini lived before the third century B.C." Böhtlingk places him in the fourth century B.C. and his view is accepted by Macdonell (Sanskrit Literature, p. 17), Keith and many other western scholars; while Sir R. G. Bhandarkar says that "Pāṇini must have flourished in the beginning of the seventh century B.C. if not earlier still." (E. H. D., p. 8.)

As the question of Pāṇini's date is important for determining the antiquity of the Bhāgavata religion it will not be quite out of place to state our own views on the subject.

Pāṇini lived not only before Patañjali, but also before Kātyāyana who wrote the Vārttikas on his grammar, and who was himself a predecessor of Patañjali. This fact forbids the acceptance of the theory of Hopkins that Pāṇini lived in the third century B.C.; for that would leave an interval of considerably less than a century between Kātyāyana and Patañjali. The actual interval

between these two grammarians cannot be so short because Sir R. G. Bhandarkar points out that Patañjali notices variant readings of Kātyāyana's Vārttikas as found in the texts used by the schools of the Bhāradvājīyas, Saunāgas, and others.

Böhtlingk's theory rests upon a story in the Kathāsaritsāgara, a collection of popular tales belonging to the eleventh century A.D., where Pāṇini is said to have been the disciple of one Varsha, who lived at Pātaliputra in the reign of King Nanda. But as Weber points out (Ind. Lit., p. 217) the authority of such a work is extremely questionable in reference to a period fifteen centuries earlier. Moreover, the work makes Kātyāyana a contemporary of Pāṇini (see Goldstücker's Pāṇini, His place in Sanskrit Literature, p. 61). But as Goldstücker points out the two grammarians really belonged to two different periods of Hindu antiquity (op. cit., p. 93); the assertion is also contradicted by a statement of Kātyāyana himself. A rule of Pāṇini, iv, 3, 105, teaches us that the names of Brāhmaṇas and Kalpas are formed by adding the affix "ṇini" to the proper names of the personage who proclaims them, provided that such a personage is an old authority. As the Brāhmaṇas proclaimed by Yājñavalkya are not formed by the affix "ṇini" it is clear that Pāṇini did not include Yājñavalkya among the old authorities (Goldstücker, Pāṇini, p. 101).

To Pāṇini's rule Kātyāyana adds a Vārttika "among the Brāhmaṇas and Kalpas which are proclaimed by an old one there is an exception in reference to Yājñavalkya and so on, on account of the contemporaneousness namely, of these latter Brāhmaṇas with the old Brāhmaṇas spoken of by Pāṇini." (Op. cit., p. 105.)

Thus works (*e.g.*, the Brāhmaṇas proclaimed by Yājñavalkya) which Pāṇini did not include among the

purāṇaprokta Brāhmaṇas came to be considered by Kātyāyana to be as old as those which were old to Pāṇini. The two grammarians therefore could not have been contemporaries.

Kātyāyana's date, fourth century B.C., may now be relied upon. This date does not solely depend on 'the ghost story' of the Kathā-sarit-sāgara (as Dr. R. L. Mitra says in his Introduction to the Aitareya Āraṇyaka) but follows from the ascertained date of Patañjali (E.H.D., p. 7; E.H.I., 3rd edition, p. 451, n.). The interval of two centuries between Kātyāyana and Patañjali will not appear too long when we remember that the grammarians of the schools of the Bhāradvājīyas and Saunāgas, Kuṇaravāḍava, Saurya Bhāgavat and Kuṇi lived before Patañjali and after Kātyāyana since all their Vārttikas or remarks, recorded by Patañjali, are criticisms on, and emendations of, the Vārttikas of Kātyāyana (Goldstücker, Pāṇini, 1914, p. 68).

Pāṇini therefore lived before the fourth century B.C. But it is difficult to accept the statement of Sir R. G. Bhandarkar that he cannot be placed later than the seventh century B.C. Pāṇini knows not merely "the three saṁhitās of the Rik, Sāman and Black Yajus," as contended by Goldstücker (Pāṇini, p. 108), but also Brāhmaṇas and Kalpas (iv, 3, 105) and refers to Sūtrakāras (iii, 2, 23). He also mentions the Mahābhārata (vi. 2, 38) which is not recognised in any Sanskrit literary work till after the end of the Brāhmaṇa period, and only in the Grihya Sūtras. Pāṇini's date must therefore fall in the age of the latest sūtras.

The most important chronological datum is furnished by the mention of *Yavana* (iv, 1, 49). *Yavana*, or *Yona* was a term used in ancient India to denote the Greeks. In Asoka's Rock Edict XIII Antiochos is called a

Yonarāja. In the Besnagar Pillar Inscription Heliodoros, the ambassador of Antialkidas is called a *Yonaduta*. We know from the cuneiform inscriptions of the Achaemenian Kings of Persia that they had no other name for the Greeks but Ya-u-na (Ind. Ant., 1875, p. 245). This Persian form of the name Yavana was not unknown to the Hindus :—

Uttarāpathajanmānaḥ kīrtayishyāmi tānapi

***Yauna** Kāmboja Gāndhārāḥ Kirātā Barbaraiḥ saha*

Mbh., xii, 207. 43.

It is a desperate resort to imagine that this well-known ethnic term really means non-Greeks. Pāṇini in his Sūtra iv, l. 49 explains the formation of the word yavanāni—to which according to the Vārttika, the word 'lipi,' writing, must be supplied, and which therefore signifies "the writing of the Yavanas or Greeks," and not "the writing of the Persians," or "the cuneiform writing" (Goldstücker, Pāṇini, 1914, p. 12). The employment by the Indians of a special term and affix to denote the Greek writing could only have arisen after long acquaintance with the Yavanas and their alphabet. Such a prolonged intercourse between the Indians and the Greeks was not in my opinion possible in the seventh century B.C. when the empires of Assyria, and Media intervened between India and Hellas, but was possible, and even probable after the Achaemenian conquest of Gandhāra (the native land of Pāṇini) for the Persian empire formed a link which connected India with Greece, and Greek mercenaries and Greek officials were largely employed by the Persian Kings and Satraps (Rapson, Ancient India, p. 87).

Pāṇini therefore, in all probability, lived after the Persian conquest of Gandhāra in the latter half of the sixth century B.C., but before the fourth century B.C. With a date in the fifth century B.C. all the evidence

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accommodates itself. With such a date accords the fact that Pāṇini knows the Persians as a warlike people (v, 3. 117), but, unlike later grammarians, never alludes to the Yavanas or Śakas as fighting races. The interval of a century between Pāṇini and Kātyāyana is not too short in view of the fact that "the oldest author on record who wrote on Pāṇini was Kātyāyana." (Goldstücker, Pāṇini, 1914, p. 90).

Since Pāṇini probably flourished in the fifth century B.C. the Bhāgavata (Vāsudevaka) sect must have arisen before that time. We learn from the Sūtras iv, 3. 95 and iv, 3. 98 that the new faith was even in the fifth century B.C. a religion of Bhakti.

We have seen that the religion preached by Rāmānuja and professed by the Ālwārs existed before the Christian era, and that its votaries were called Bhāgavatas or Vāsudevakas, *i.e.*, the Bhaktas or followers of Vāsudeva. Vāsudeva is thus the fountain head of Vaishṇavism. No doubt under the comprehensive designation of Vaishṇavism are included a number of sectaries who recognise other personages than Vāsudeva as their Saviour. The most important of these are the followers of Rāmānanda and Kavīra. But the vast majority of the Vaishṇavas are still Vāsudevites and even those who pay exclusive devotion to Rāma cannot trace the origin of their doctrine to any other source than Rāmānuja who, as we have seen, owes his tenets to the earlier Āchāryas and Ālwārs, who in their turn were offshoots from the Bhāgavatas or Vāsudevakas of Northern India mentioned in the inscriptions discovered at Besnagar and Ghasundi and also in the Ashtādhyāyī of the prince of grammarians, Pāṇini.

We have little authentic information regarding Vāsudeva, round whom the Bhāgavata movement centred. The name Vāsudeva occurs once in the Vedic literature, *viz.*, in a

passage of the tenth Prapāṭhaka of the Taittirīya Āraṇyaka —*Nārāyaṇāya vidmahe, Vāsudevāya dhīmahi tanno Vishṇuḥ prachodayāt.* Here Vāsudeva is a name of Vishṇu. But the last book of the Taittirīya Āraṇyaka is a late work (Dr. R. L. Mitra's Introduction to the T. A., p. 8). It is described as khilarūpa or supplementary. Vishṇu does not receive the name 'Vāsudeva' in any of the Saṁhitās, Brāhmaṇas or classical Upanishads.

In the Bhagavadgītā "which contains probably the oldest dogmatic exposition we possess of Vishṇuism" (Barth, The Religions of India, p. 191; *cf.* also Mbh., xii, 348. 6-8) and which is recognised as an Upanishad by the Hindus, Vāsudeva is said to have been a scion of the Vrishṇi family:—

Vrishṇinām Vāsudevo'smi Pāṇḍavānām Dhanañjayaḥ.

The Vrishṇis are mentioned in the Ashtādhyāyī of Pāṇini (iv, l. 114) and in the Arthaśāstra of Kauṭilya (R. Shamasastry's translation, p. 13). Scions of the family are mentioned in the Taittirīya Saṁhitā (iii, 11·9. 3), the Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa (iii, 10. 9. 15), the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa (iii, 1. 1. 4) and the Jaiminīya Upanishad Brāhmaṇa (i, 6. 1).

The Ghata Jātaka (The Jātakas, Cowell's edition, Vol. IV, p. 50) gives the Buddhist version of the story of Vāsudeva just as the Daśaratha Jātaka gives the Buddhist version of the story of Rāma. It describes Vāsudeva as a scion of the royal family of "Upper Madhurā" (pp. 50-51), but does not give the name of the family. But it is not difficult to find out that the Vrishṇi family is meant. The Jātaka says that the family of Vāsudeva perished for their irreverent conduct towards Kaṇhadīpāyana (pp. 55-56). Kauṭilya refers to this incident in his Arthaśāstra but substitutes "the corporation of the Vrishṇis" for the family of Vāsudeva:—

"Whoever has not his organs of sense under his control, will soon perish.........Vātāpi in his attempt under-

the influence of overjoy to attack Agastya, as well as the corporation of the Vrishṇis in their attempt against Dvaipāyana."

(R. Shama Sastry's translation of Kauṭilya's Artha-śāstra, pp. 12-13.)

The Jaina Uttarādhyayana Sūtra, Lecture XXII, confirms the statement of the Gītā and the Jātaka that Vāsudeva was a Kshatriya Prince.

The Mahābhārata, the great storehouse of Hindu tradition, usually takes Vāsudeva to mean "the son of Vasudeva" (*cf.* Mbh., iii, 14. 8). But in certain passages a different etymology is given.

Vasanāt Sarvabhūtānām Vasutvāddevayonitaḥ
Vāsudevastato vedyo brihattvād Vishṇuruchyate
Mbh., v, 70. 3.

"He is called Vāsudeva in consequence of his enveloping all creatures with the screen of illusion, or of his glorious splendour, or of his being the support and resting place of the gods."

Chhādayāmi jagad viśvam bhūtvā sūrya ivāmśubhiḥ
Sarvabhūtādhivāsaścha Vāsudevastatohyaham
Mbh., xii, 341. 41.

"Assuming the form of the Sun I cover the universe with my rays. And because I am the home of all creatures, therefore, am I called by the name of Vāsudeva."

The Mahābhārata knows a false Vāsudeva as well as the true Vāsudeva. The false Vāsudeva was a king of the Pauṇḍras (Mbh., i, 186. 12; ii, 14. 20; etc.). The true Vāsudeva was Krishṇa, the famous prince of the Yādava, Vrishṇi or Sātvata family of Mathurā. It is written in the Śāntiparva (Mbh., xii, 348. 6-8) that the Sātvata or

Bhāgavata Dharma was first taught by Krishṇa Vāsudeva to Arjuna :—

Samupoḍheshvanīkeshu Kuru Pāṇḍavayormridhe
Arjune vimanaske cha gītā Bhagavatā svayam

Mbh., xii, 348. 8.

This fact forbids the acceptance of the theory of Mr. A. Govindāchārya Svāmin that the Bhāgavata Śāstra was "not originated by Vāsudeva, the son of Vasudeva —Krishṇa," (J. R. A. S., 1911, p. 936), because forsooth, the word Vāsudeva also means "He who permeates all" and the Padmatantra distinguishes between the two Vāsudevas. The name Sātvata Dharma applied to the Bhāgavata religion also shows that it originated in the Sātvata prince Vāsudeva. The association of Vāsudeva with Saṇkarshaṇa in the Bhāgavata inscriptions of the first and second centuries B.C. also proves that Krishṇa the brother of Saṇkarshaṇa (Saṇkarshaṇānuja, Mbh., ii, 79. 23) was the real Vāsudeva worshipped by the early Bhāgavatas.

According to Sir R. G. Bhandarkar, Vāsudeva and Krishṇa were originally names of distinct individuals. In the opinion of that great scholar Vāsudeva was a Kshatriya belonging to the Yādava, Vrishṇi or Sātvata race who founded a theistic system. Later on "he was identified with Krishṇa whose name had been handed down as that of a holy seer." (Ind. Ant., 1912, p. 13).

Nobody will deny the existence of several "holy seers" bearing the name of Krishṇa who were quite distinct from Vāsudeva of the Vrishṇi race. Such were Krishṇa the father of Viśvakāya (Rig Veda, i, 116. 23; i, 117. 7), Krishṇa Āṅgirasa (Kaush. Br., xxx, 9), Krishṇa Hārita (Ait. Āraṇyaka, iii, 2. 6), Kaṇha the

mighty seer mentioned in the Ambaṭṭha sutta (Rhys Davids, Dialogues of the Buddha, I, p. 118). But it is impossible to accept the statement that Krishṇa whom epic tradition identifies with Vāsudeva · was originally an altogether different individual. On the contrary all available evidences, Hindu, Buddhist, and Greek point to the correctness of the identity; and we agree with Keith when he says that "the separation of Vāsudeva and Kṛṣṇa as two entities it is impossible to justify" (J. R. A. S., 1915, p. 840).

We learn from Patañjali that the event of the death of Kaṁsa at the hands of Krishṇa was in his age believed to have occurred at a very remote time. He says "*chirahate Kaṁse*" which means that Kaṁsa's death occurred at a very remote time. That Krishṇa was the slayer is evident from the following statements found in the Mahābhāshya :-–

Prahārādriśyante Kaṁsasyacha Krishṇasyacha ;
Asādhur mātule Krishṇaḥ.

But in another place it is said that "in the days of yore Vāsudeva killed Kaṁsa"—*Jaghāna Kaṁsam kila Vāsudevaḥ.* It is thus clear that from the remotest times, from a period which was considered to be an ancient one even by Patañjali, Krishṇa and Vāsudeva were considered to be names of one and the same individual—the slayer of Kaṁsa. Sir R. G. Bhandarkar points out (Vaiṣṇavism, p. 10) that in Kielhorn's edition of the Mahābhāshya the name 'Vāsudeva' takes the place of Krishṇa in one passage; but then, from no manuscript is the name Krishṇa entirely absent. The frequency of the name 'Vāsudeva' may be due to the fact which he has himself proved that it was the proper name, while 'Krishṇa' was the Gotra name (pp. 10, 12).

In the Ghata-Jātaka Vāsudeva receives the epithet "Kaṇha" that is, Krishṇa :—

"Just then a courtier named Rohiṇeyya, went into the presence of King Vāsudeva, and opened a conversation with him by reciting the first stanza :

"Black Kaṇha, rise ! why close the eyes to sleep ? why lying there ?

Thine own brother—see, the winds away his wit do bear,

Away his wisdom ! Ghata raves, thou of the long black hair ! "

Cowell's Jātaka, Vol. IV, p. 54.

The Greek writers, Megasthenes and Arrian, mention Herakles as one held in special honour by the Sourasenoi an Indian tribe who possessed two large cities Methora and Kleisobora. (McCrindle, Ancient India as described by Megasthenes and Arrian, p. 201) Bhandarkar identifies the Sourasenoi with the Sātvatas and Herakles with Vāsudeva. According to Lassen, McCrindle and Hopkins, Methora and Kleisobora are Mathurā and Krishṇapura. (McCrindle's Megasthenes and Arrian, p. 140, n. ; Ind. Ant., 1876, p. 334 ; Hopkins, Religious India, p. 459). Now, Megasthenes lived full two centuries before Patañjali. The name of the second city (Krishṇapura) mentioned by him is a certain indication of the early and inseparable connection of Krishṇa with the Sourasenoi or Sātvatas.

In the Chhāndogya Upanishad iii, 17. 4) Krishṇa learns the same doctrines—tapodānamārjjavam ahiṁsā satyavachanam—which Vāsudeva teaches in the Gītā xvi, 1-2).

The rank growth of legend which has clustered round the name of Krishṇa Vāsudeva reminds us of the extravagant tales which obscure the genuine history of Kapila, of Buddha, and of Aśoka. The Krishṇa stories may not

all be either fiction or myth ; but they are no better suited to serve as the foundation of sober history than the tales of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa, of the Saddharma-puṇḍarīka, or of the Aśokāvadāna are adapted to form the basis of Chronicles of the doings of the Sāṁkhya sage, the Śākya reformer or the Maurya monarch. In his Early History of India V. A. Smith complains that most writers upon Aśoka's reign have begun at the wrong end with the late legends, instead of at the right end with the contemporary inscriptions. Similarly most writers upon the life of Krishṇa have begun at the wrong end with the late epic and paurāṇic legends instead of at the right end with the early Brāhmaṇas and Upanishads.

On the strength of the late legends several scholars have come to the conclusion that Krishṇa Vāsudeva was not a human being, but a popular deity whose cult being foisted upon a dummy Vishṇu gave rise to sectarian Vaishṇavism. For example, Barth says in his Religions of India, p. 166, that Krishṇa is "beyond all doubt, a popular divinity" and that "there is a connection between the attainment of supremacy by Vishṇu and his identification with Krishṇa." "The supremacy of the Brāhmaṇic god was the result of his fusion with the popular god."

Barth considers Krishṇa to be a solar deity. "Like those of many solar deities, his first appearances were beset with perils and obstructions of every kind. On the very night of his birth his parents had to remove him to a distance beyond the reach of his uncle king Kaṁsa who sought his life. In the Veda the sun in the form of Mārtaṇḍa is the eighth son born of Aditi, and his mother casts him off just as Devakī who is at times represented as an incarnation of Aditi removes Krishṇa. Conveyed to the opposite shore of the Yamunā and put under the care of the shepherd Nanda and his wife Yaçodā he was

brought up as their son in the woods of Brindāban with his brother Balarāma. Arrived at adolescence the two brothers put to death Kaṁsa, and Krishṇa became king of the Yādavas. He took a determined side in the great struggle of the sons of Pāṇḍu against those of Dhritarāshtra which forms the subject of the Mahābhārata. In the interval he had transferred the seat of his dominions to the fabulous city of Dwārakā, the city of gates, the gates of the West. It was here that he was overtaken himself and his race by the final catastrophe."

According to Hopkins (The Religions of India, p. 388) "The Vishṇu worship which grew about Krishṇa was probably at first an attempt to foist upon Vedic believers a sectarian god, by identifying the latter with a Vedic divinity." "The epic describes the overthrow of an old Brāhmaṇic Aryan race at the hands of the Pāṇḍavas, an unknown folk, whose King's polyandrous marriage is an historical trait, connecting the tribe closely with the polyandrous wild tribes located north of the Ganges. This tribe attacked the stronghold of Brāhmaṇism in the holy land about the present Delhi; and their patron god is the Gangetic Krishṇa" (R. I., pp. 466-467). "The simple original view of Krishṇa is that he is a god, the son of Devakī" (R.I., p. 467).

Other scholars find in Krishṇa a development from one of those vegetation deities that seem to have been so widely worshipped and to have obtained so strong a hold of men's devotion in all countries of the world. Such were the Semitic Adonis, the Egyptian Osiris and the Greek Dionysos. They mention his connection with cattle as Govinda, the vegetation spirit being usually supposed to incarnate itself in such animals, his near relationship with Balarāma, who is supposed to be a god of harvest, his name Dāmodara, *i.e.*, the god "with a cord

round his belly," a description which is supposed to be derived from wheatsheaf, and the most significant of all, the evidence of the Mahābhāshya of Patañjali that he appeared in a "vegetation masque" contending with Kaṁsa for the possession of the Sun. Dr. Keith, an ardent advocate of this theory, remarks (J. R. A. S., 1915, p. 841): "It is clear that from this original divine character of Krishṇa as the spirit of the reviving vegetation we can derive his whole character both as a child and as a hero, for the vegetation spirit has both sides in the Greek Dionysos who is in this aspect parallel to Krishṇa, and the legend of Kaṁsa is a mythological invention based on the ritual of (*a*) the childgod, and (*b*) the slaying of a rival—the old spirit of vegetation or some similar conception by the new spirit."

We shall not canvass in detail the views of Barth. His theory is of a piece with the brilliant study of Senart, in which the figure of Buddha is similarly resolved into a solar type and the history of the reformer becomes a sun-myth. Dr. Keith observes (J. R. A. S., 1908, p. 171): "It hardly seems possible to ascribe to Krishṇa an original solar character. His name tells seriously against it: the 'dark sun' requires more explanation that it seems likely to receive."

The theory of Hopkins rests on a mass of unproved hypothesis. There is no good reason to believe that the Pāṇḍavas were an "unknown folk connected with the wild tribes located north of the Ganges" and that Krishṇa was the "patron God" of the tribe. Hindu tradition is unanimous in representing the Pāṇḍavas as an offshoot of the Kuru race. In the Great Epic the epithet Kurukulodvaha is applied to Pāṇḍu (i, 126, 33) and to Yudhishthira (ii, 46, 5); (iii, 17, 9). The testimony of Buddhist literature points to the same conclusion. In the Dasa-

Brāhmaṇa Jātaka (Cowell's Jātaka, Vol. IV, p. 227) a king " of the stock of Yuddhiṭṭhila " reigning " in the kingdom of Kuru and the city called Indapatta " is distinctly called " Koravya " *i.e.*, Kauravya— " belonging to the Kuru race." In the Kurudhamma Jātaka (Cowell's Jātaka, Vol. II, p. 251) Dhanañjaya, king of Indapatta city, is called " the Kuru King." " He grew in Kuru-righteousness, keeping the ten royal duties."

The polyandrous marriage of the Pāṇḍu king, which Hopkins considers to be an " historical trait," is no proof of the connection of the Pāṇḍavas with any non-Brāhmaṇic wild tribe. The marriage was approved by the Pañchālas, an undoubtedly Brāhmaṇic tribe. We learn also from the Mahābhārata that such marriages were prevalent among certain Brāhmaṇic Rishi families :—

" Śruyate hi purāṇe' pi Jatilānāma Gautamī
Rishinadhyāsitavatī saptadharmabhritāmvarā
Tathaiva munijā Vārkshī Tapobhirbhāvitātmanaḥ
Sangatābhūt daśabhrātrinekanāmnaḥ Prachetasaḥ"

Mbh., i, 196, 14-15. *Cf.* Matsya Purāṇa iv, 47-49.

"I have heard in the Purāṇa that a lady named Jatilā, the foremost of all virtuous women belonging to the race of Gotama, had married seven Rishis. So also an ascetic's daughter named Vārkshī had in former times united herself in marriage with ten brothers bearing the same name of Prachetā and who were all of souls exalted by asceticism."

The name of the greatest of the Pāṇḍavas, Arjuna, is a thoroughly Brāhmaṇic name. It occurs in the Mādhyandina recension of the Saṁhitā of the White Yajus (x, 21) :—

" To obtain intrepidity, to obtain food, (I, the offerer, ascend) thee (O chariot) I, the inviolate Arjuna."

There is no proof that any section of the Kuru people had a patron god named Krishṇa. Krishṇa is represented as a prince of the Vrishṇi clan in the Gītā "which is unquestionably one of the older poems of the epic" (Hopkins, The Great Epic of India, p. 205). He is never called the patron god of any invading barbarous tribe.

The theory of those who assert that Krishṇa was a vegetation deity rests upon no better foundation. Krishṇa's connection with cattle is no proof that he was a vegetation deity. The connection of Moses with "the flock of Jethrow his father-in-law" is well known to students of the Bible (Exodus, 3. 1). The Yamunā region, the scene of Krishṇa's childhood, was renowned for its cattle even in the early Vedic period (Rig Veda, v. 52, 17). "May the seven times seven all-potent Maruts, (aggregated as) a single troop bestow upon me hundreds (of cattle) : may I possess wealth of cows, renowned upon the (banks of) the Yamunā—Yamunāyāmadhi śrutamad rādho gavyam." A Gobala Vārshṇa is mentioned as a teacher in the Taittirīya saṁhitā (iii, 11. 9. 3) and the Jaiminīya Upanishad Brāhmaṇa (i, 6. 1) Krishṇa's connection with cattle may therefore be an historical trait. There is yet another possibility. Krishṇa's names Govinda, Gopāla, Gopendra, etc., may really be connected with the epithet Gopā applied in the Rig Veda to Vishṇu, the Brāhmaṇic god with whom Krishṇa came to be identified :—

Trīṇipadā vichakrame Vishṇurgopāadābhyaḥ

(R. V. i, 22, 18).

Gopā=protector of cows, *cf.* Rig Veda, x, 19, 4 (Macdonell and Keith, Vedic Index Vol. I, p. 238), "herdsman" (Hopkins, The Religions of India, p. 57). According to the Rig Veda (i,154. 6) the highest step of Vishṇu is the dwelling of the "many horned swiftly moving cows." *Cf.* Bodhāyana Dharma Sūtra, ii, 5. 24.

We know that several Vedic epithets of Vishṇu were in the epics and the Purāṇas applied to Krishṇa Vāsudeva. We have already seen that in the Rigveda Vishṇu is revered under the title " Śipivishta" (vii, 100. 5. 6). Now this epithet is given to Krishṇa in the Great Epic (xii, 43. 8 ; xii, 342. 72-73) : In the Satapatha Brāhmaṇa, i, 2. 5, Vishṇu is called Vāmana ; in the Mahābhārata xii, 43. 12, Krishṇa receives the same epithet.

As regards Dāmodara we need only point out that it does not necessarily mean " the God with a cord round his belly." The word is used in an altogether different sense in the epic :—

* * * * * *

" *Devānām svaprakāśatvād damāddāmodaro vibhuḥ* "

Mbh., v, 70. 8.

" That supreme soul is called Dāmodara because unlike the gods his effulgence is increate and his own, and also because he hath self-control (dama) and great splendour."

We shall now consider the evidence of Patañjali. The passage on which Dr. Keith and others rely as supporting their theory runs as follows :—*Vyamisrā driśyante kechit Kaṁsabhaktā bhavanti kechid Vāsudeva bhakthā. Varṇānyatvam khalvapi pushyanti kechit kālamukhā bhavanti kechidraktamukhāḥ.*

The slaying of Kaṁsa by Krishṇa was the subject of dramatic representations in the time of Patañjali. According to Dr. Keith's interpretation of the Mahābhāshya passage quoted above, in these performances the granthikas divided themselves into two parts ; those representing the followers of Kaṁsa had their faces blackened, kālamukhāḥ, those of Krishṇa had their faces red, raktamukhāḥ, and they expressed the feelings of both sides throughout the struggle from Krishṇa's birth to the death of Kaṁsa. " The mention of the colour of the two parties,"

says Keith is most significant; red man slays black man; the spirit of spring and summer prevails over the spirit of the dark winter. The parallel is too striking to be mistaken. We are entitled to say that in India, as in Greece, this primitive dramatic ritual slaying of winter is the source whence the drama is derived." (J. R. A. S., 1911, p. 1008.)

But Keith's interpretation of the Mahābhāshya passage is by no means accepted by all. The meaning of the passage with its context is thus given by Bhandarkar in the Ind. Ant., 1874, p. 15 :

"The narrators give expression to what they know about them (Kaṁsa and Krishṇa) from their birth to their death, and thus externally manifest what at the time exists internally, and that the things do exist internally or in the mind is shown in this way. They (the narrators) are of various kinds, some are adherents or devotees of Kaṁsa, and some of Vāsudeva. Their countenances assume different colours; the faces of some (whose favourite hero is defeated) become dark, the faces of others red." There is thus no allusion to the slaying of the black man by the red man or to the slaying of winter by the spirit of spring and summer.

The pre-epical literature of the Hindus bears unequivocal testimony to the human character of Krishṇa. The Chhāndogya Upanishad which is one of the oldest Upanishads (Hopkins, The Great Epic of India, p. 385) and which undoubtedly belongs to the pre-Buddhistic period (Macdonell's Hist. Sans. Lit., p. 226; Dr. R. L. Mitra's Introduction to the Chh. Up., pp. 23-24) mentions Krishṇa Devakīputra as a human sage, a disciple of the Rishi Ghora Āṅgirasa (iii, 17. 6) :—

Taddhaitad Ghora Āṅgirasaḥ Krishṇāya Devakīputrāyoktvovāchā pipāsa eva sa babhūva so'nta velāyāmetat trayam pratipadyeta—akshitamachyutamasi prāṇasaṁśitamasīti.

The human character of Krishṇa is also manifest in the Buddhist Ghata Jātaka as well as in the Jaina Uttarādhyayana sūtra (Lecture XXII).

Max Müller denies (S. B. E. I., 52, n. 1), and Macdonell and Keith doubt the identity of Krishṇa Devakīputra of the epic and the Purāṇas with Krishṇa Devakīputra of the Upanishad. Referring to the Krishṇa of the Upanishad the latter scholars observe in the Vedic Index, "Tradition and several modern writers like Grierson, Garbe and Von Schroeder recognise in him the hero Krishṇa who later is deified. In their view he is a Kshatriya teacher of morals, as opposed to Brāhmaṇism. This is extremely doubtful. It appears better either to regard the coincidence of name as accidental, or to suppose that the reference is a piece of euhemerism."

Barth accepts the identity of the two Krishṇas but characterises the mention of Krishṇa in the Upanishad as an absolutely euhemerist representation. (R. I., p. 168.)

Dr. Keith has dealt fully with the subject in J. R. A. S., 1915 (pp. 548-550). "In the Chhāndogya Upanishad we hear of a pupil Kṛṣṇa Devakīputra, of Ghora Āṅgirasa who is credited with certain doctrines. We are asked to believe that this is an historical reference to the Kṛṣṇa of the epic. It is a much more credible hypothesis on the theory of the identity of the Kṛṣṇas that we have in this Kṛṣṇa a euhemerism, a reduction to human rank of a tribal God and it is the only hypothesis which does not raise serious difficulties as to the date of the divinity of Kṛṣṇa and his appearance in the epic. That text never treats Kṛṣṇa as a mere ordinary mortal teacher; when he teaches he reveals himself as the Supreme Being and we cannot ignore the fact that his divine nature is clearly known throughout the epic, which in a part claimed as old by Garbe (II. 2291) calls him Gopījanavallabha

revealing him already as the beloved of the Gopīs, a feature which sits oddly on a presumed warrior-teacher, but which accords well with a god of Kṛṣṇa's type closely connected with pastoral life. Moreover, it is impossible to ignore the fact that in the epic Kṛṣṇa appears in his actions and his practical advice in a very different aspect from the Kṛṣṇa of the Upanisad, who appears in a passage where among other virtues the telling of truth is inculcated." (Chh., iii, 17. 4).

In his Early History of the Deccan, p. 8, Sir R. G. Bhandarkar points out that though a Mahābhārata existed before Pāṇini and Āśvalāyana, it is highly questionable whether our present text is the same as that which existed in their times. On the contrary, the probability is that the work has been added to from time to time ; and the text itself has undergone such corruption that no one can be positively certain that a particular word was not foisted into it in comparatively modern times.

Hopkins shows in his Great Epic of India that the "Pāṇḍu epic as we have it represents a period subsequent not only to Buddhism 500 B.C. but to the Greek invasion 300 B.C." (G. E., I. p. 391). Now, we know from the Besnagar Inscription that Vāsudeva (who, judging from the context, was to Pāṇini only a Kshatriya worthy—see Weber's Ind. Lit., p. 185, n.)—was in the 2nd century B.C. recognised as "the God of gods." Is it therefore strange that the present Mahābhārata treats Krishṇa as a divine teacher ? It is perfectly intelligible that a work representing a period subsequent to 300 B.C.—a time when the apotheosis of Vāsudeva was an established fact—should reveal him as a god. It is equally obvious that such a work cannot be accepted as an authority for characterising as a piece of euhemerism the mention of Krishṇa as a human pupil in a book which was composed before the rise

of Buddhism in the sixth century B.C. In the Saddharma-puṇḍarīka (vii. 31) Buddha is not merely deva; he is devātideva. Will any one contend on the strength of this statement that the mention of Buddha as a human teacher in the Dhammachakkappavattanasutta is a piece of euhemerism?

We have already expressed our views regarding the pastoral associations of Krishṇa. There is no inherent improbability in Krishṇa's being a shepherd as well as a warrior-teacher. Moses and Mahomed furnish good parallels. It is however possible that the legend of the pastoral Krishṇa really arose from the Vedic legend of Vishṇu Gopā, just as the story of the Vāmana incarnation arose out of the legend of Vishṇu Urukrama.

With reference to Keith's remarks regarding the difference between the characters of the Epic and Upanishadic Krishṇas, it may be said that in the Aśokāvadāna, the Ceylonese Chronicles and the Si-yu-ki Aśoka appears in his actions and his practical advice in a very different aspect from the Aśoka of the Fifth and Thirteenth Rock Edicts. Are we to conclude from this that the Aśoka of the inscriptions is not identical with the Aśoka of the Chronicles? Again, Keith ignores the fact that the telling of truth is inculcated by the Epic-Krishṇa in the Gītā, xvi. 2. and in several other passages of the Mahābhārata *e.g.* Mbh. VII. 179-29.

Dr. Keith next goes on to say, "It is, however, of course possible that the similarity of name is a mere accident: metronymics are very frequent in the Vaṁśas of the Upaniṣads, and Kṛṣṇa is not rarely found as a non-divine name; the only point of doubt in this view is the rarity of Devakī, but this is not conclusive; Professor Garbe himself resigns his former view that the Patañjalis of the Mahābhāṣya and of the Yoga are identical. Nor can a

third possibility be excluded: Kṛṣṇa as a god and a teacher may differ, but Devakīputra may be borrowed by the former from the latter, though this is less probable. We must, to be candid, recognize that our evidence is insufficient to decide the precise facts, and that we cannot build on it the edifice of the Kṛṣṇa who founded the Bhāgavata sect as a mere man. The epic has a god, the Upaniṣad a man, and the means of connexion are not apparent."

It is not so easy to refute an improbable historical theory as it is to propound it, but on the other hand the *onus probandi* rests upon him that propounds it. Dr. Keith admits that his evidence "is insufficient to decide the precise facts," but nevertheless remarks that the similarity between the names of the two Krishṇas may be a mere accident as in the case of the Patañjalis of the Mahābhāshya and of the Yoga. We readily admit that a mere similarity of names is no proof of identity. But in the case of the two Krishṇas the similarity extends further than this. The epic Krishṇa is the son of Devakī (Mbh. I. 190. 33; III. 29. 46; etc.), the Krishṇa of the Upanishad is also called the son of Devakī. The epic Krishṇa teaches "Dānaṁ damaścha yajñaścha svādhyāyaṁ tapa ārjjavam ahiṁsā satya makrodhaḥ..." in the Gītā (XVI. 1-2); the Krishṇa of the Upanishad learns the same doctrines from Ghora Āṅgirasa "Atha yattapo dānamārjjavamahiṁsā satyavachanamiti tā asya dakshiṇāḥ (Chh. Up. III. 17. 4).

Furthermore, the Great Epic has preserved distinct traces of the original character of Krishṇa as a human being. Krishṇa says in the Udyogaparva:—

Ahaṁhi tat karishyāmi paraṁ purushakārataḥ
Daivantu na mayā śakyaṁ karmakarttuṁ kathañchana
(*Mbh. V. 79. 5-6*).

"I will do all that can be done by human exertion at its best. But I shall, by no means, be able to control what is providential."

The statement that Devakīputra may be borrowed by the epic from the Upanishad requires no comment; we have already seen that there are other "means of connexion" beside the metronymic which go far to prove the identity of the two Krishṇas.

We have seen that the arguments of scholars who hold that Krishṇa Devakīputra was originally a deity do not bear scrutiny. We have also seen that there can be no reasonable objection to his identity with Krishṇa Devakīputra mentioned in one of the oldest Upanishads. The pre-epical literature of the Hindus knows a human Krishṇa but is silent about a deity Krishṇa. Buddhist and Jaina traditions clearly refer to Vāsudeva as a human hero. Even the Mahābhārata preserves traces of the original human character of Krishṇa. The conclusion, therefore, is irresistible that he was a real man. The divine nature of Krishṇa known throughout the greater part of the epic belonging in its present form to a period subsequent to the rule of the Scythians, Greeks, and Bactrians (Mbh. III, 188. 35) would certainly not appear strange to those who will notice the appearance of Buddha among a crowd of heterogeneous deities in the monuments of the Indo-Scythian period (V. Smith, E. H., I. 3rd Edition, p. 266). In the case of Kapila we find another instance of a human teacher being raised to the dignity of a divine being in the epic (*cf.* Mbh. III, 47, 18; VII, 220. 21; Hopkins, The Great Epic of India, p. 98).

We have tried to prove that Krishṇa Vāsudeva was a man. There remains the further question, "was he a hero who rose step by step to the rank of divinity, or was

he a monotheistic reformer, a theistic Buddha before Buddha's day, who later like the Buddha himself was deified by his disciples?" Dr. Macnicol suggests "it is possible that he was a famous prince of the Sātvata race and on his death was deified." We admit that there is much to be said for this view. Krishṇa appears as a disciple of a Rishi in the Chhāndogya Upanishad, but that does not show that he was himself a teacher. The Ghata Jātaka knows him only as a prince and a warrior, not as a leader of thought. The teaching contained in the Gītā is attributed to him, but that poem by its reference to the Brahmasūtras (Gītā XIII. 5) presupposes the existence of the classical Upanishads, while Krishṇa himself is mentioned in one of the oldest Upanishads. The other works attributed to Krishṇa, *e.g.*, the Anugītā are even later than the Bhagavadgītā.

On the other hand, it may be said that the Chhāndogya Upanishad does not pretend to give a life history of Kṛishṇa. Its reference to him is incidental; and though it does not represent him as a teacher, it yet shows that he came into contact with a leader of thought, and learnt several doctrines. The Jātaka knows Vāsudeva Kaṇha only as a prince and a warrior, but what more can we expect from a Buddhist work of this kind? Lastly, the ascription of the entire Gītā to Krishṇa may well be looked upon with suspicion, but the fact remains that when the Pāṇḍu epic was being written Krishṇa was remembered not only as a hero, but as a teacher. If Krishṇa was only a hero, if the fundamental doctrines of the Bhāgavatas were not taught by him, but by some unknown person, we are driven to the assumption that the ancient Bhāgavatas forgot or suppressed the name of the Master from whom has flowed through the centuries until to-day the stream of Bhakti in India. In this connection it may be pointed

out that though the Gītā as a whole is posterior to the classical Upanishads, its fundamental doctrines may really have been taught by Krishṇa Devakīputra. For it will be shown in the next lecture that some of these doctrines agree almost verbatim with those which Krishṇa learnt from his Guru Ghora Âṅgirasa.

The fact that Krishṇa was a human teacher is admitted by some of the greatest savants of the present age, such as Bhandarkar, Dr. Seal, Bühler, Grierson and Garbe. (The Indian Antiquary, 1889, p. 189; Comparative Studies in Vaishṇavism and Christianity, p. 10; Ind. Ant. 1894, p. 248; Ind. Ant., 1908, p. 253; Garbe, Philosophy of Ancient India, pp. 83-85).

LECTURE II

The Life of Krishṇa Vāsudeva and The Early Progress of Bhāgavatism.

If Krishṇa is a human teacher, the question naturally arises when he lived. If the traditional connection of Krishṇa with the battle of Kurukshetra has any foundation in fact, then it must be admitted that he lived before the compilation of the Kāṭhaka Saṁhitā of the Yajurveda, for, one of his traditional contemporaries Dhritarāshtra Vaichitravīrya, a prominent figure in the Kurukshetra story, is mentioned in the Kāṭhaka (Weber Ind. Lit., p. 90n).

There is a verse found with slight variants in the Matsya, Vāyu, Brahmāṇḍa, Vishṇu and Bhāgavata Purāṇas which states that "from Mahāpadma's inauguration to Parikshit's birth the interval is known as 1015 years." (1050 according to some manuscripts) :—

Yāvat Parikshito janma yāvan Nandābhishechanam
Evaṁ varshasahasraṁtujñeyampañchadaśottaram.

(Pargiter, Dynasties of the Kali Age, p. 58.)

The date of Nanda's accession according to Geiger (Mahāvamsa pxlvi) is 343 B.C.

343 B.C. + 1015 = 1358 B.C.
343 B.C. + 1050 = 1393 B.C.

1400 B.C. in round numbers is, therefore, the date of Parikshit's birth which, according to the Mahābhārata,

immediately followed the battle. We do not say, however, that implicit reliance can be placed on the chronology of the epic or of the Purāṇas.

Krishṇa certainly lived before Buddha, as he is mentioned in the Chhāndogya Upanishad which is a pre-Buddhistic work. The evidence of the Ghata Jātaka, where Krishṇa is mentioned as a brother and contemporary of Ghata the Bodhisattva, points to the same conclusion. His Guru Ghora Āṅgirasa is also mentioned in the Kaushītaki Brāhmaṇa, XXX. 6, and the Kāṭhaka Saṁhitā I. 1, which are also pre-Buddhistic works. Jaina tradition makes Krishṇa a contemporary of Arishṭanemi or Neminātha, the 22nd Tīrthankara who is the immediate predecessor of Pārśvanātha the 23rd Tīrthankara. (Jacobi, Jaina Sūtras Part I pp. 271—279. II pp. 112—119). As Pārśvanātha flourished about 817 B.C. (Mrs. Stevenson's Heart of Jainism, p. 48) Krishṇa must have lived long before the closing years of the ninth Century B.C. The name of the Vrishṇi or Sātvata family to which Krishṇa belonged is unknown to the Rig Veda but is frequently referred to in the Brāhmaṇas. The overthrow of the family is alluded to by Kauṭilya in his Arthaśāstra.

Regarding the life history of Krishṇa Vāsudeva we know very little if we leave aside the epic and Paurāṇic legends. "As far as it is known," says an American writer in speaking of the great Athenian sage, "the life of Socrates, in its merely outward bodily incident, may be told in a paragraph." Such unfortunately is also the case with Vāsudeva.

For a life of Krishṇa our sources are :—

(1) The Chhāndogya Upanishad.

(2) The incidental notices in the Indika of Megasthenes, and the Mahābhāshya of Patañjali.

(3) The Buddhist Ghata Jātaka and the Jaina Uttarādhyayana Sūtra.

(4) The Mahābhārata, the Harivaṁśa, the Purāṇas, and the sectarian Upanishads.

The exact date of the Chhāndogya Upanishad is not known, but it is certainly pre-Buddhistic. Referring to the date of the Upanishads, Macdonell says (Hist. Sans. Lit., p. 226) : "The earliest of them can hardly be dated later than about 600 B.C. since some important doctrines first met with in them are presupposed by Buddhism. They may be divided chronologically on internal evidence into four classes. The oldest group consisting in chronological order of the Bṛihadāraṇyaka, Chhāndogya, Taittirīya, Aitareya, Kaushītaki, is written in prose which still suffers from the awkwardness of the Brāhmaṇa style." Dr. R. L. Mitra in the introduction to his translation of the Chhāndogya Upanishad observes (pp. 23-24), "An attempt has lately been made to prove that some of the doctrines in the Chhāndogya in common with the other Upanishads are of Buddhist origin, and consequently the work itself is of a post-Buddhistic era. But the argument used to establish this hypothesis is founded on a *petitio principii*. It begins by assigning to Buddha what, as philosophic ideas, were probably well known long before they were adopted by the founder of Buddhism, and then argues the works in which they occur to be posterior to the system of Śākyasinha; when the character of those very works indicates the assumption to be utterly unfounded. The Upanishads belong to an age of search and enquiry, the Sāṅkhya to doubt following enquiry, and the Bauddha philosophy to an epoch when doubt and disbelief taking possession of men's minds, dared at last to raise their heads boldly against God Himself. The hypothesis of the post-Buddhistic origin of the Upanishads would reverse

this order, and begin with the infidelity of Śākya to be followed by the doubt of Kapila and then the enquiry of the Upanishads."

The dates of the Indika of Megasthenes and of the Mahābhāshya of Patañjali are, as is well known, the fourth and second centuries B. C., respectively. As regards the date of the Jātaka, bas-reliefs of the third century B. C. have been found illustrating a number of Jātaka stories. The Jātaka Book, according to Rhys Davids (Buddhist India, p. 206), is an example of that pre-Epic form of literature of which there are so many other shorter specimens preserved for us in the earlier canonical texts. The date of the Uttarādhyayana is also not certain. Jaina tradition attributes its lectures to Mahāvīra. Its *niryukti* is ascribed to Bhadrabāhu in the Vritti of the Rishimaṇḍala Sūtra (see Jacobi, The Kalpa Sūtra of Bhadrabāhu, 1879, p. 12). It forms a part of the Jaina Canon which was reduced to writing in A.D. 454.

The date of the Mahābhārata has been discussed with great acumen by Washburn Hopkins who has given much study to this treasure house of Indian religious lore. It is true that Pāṇini and Āśvalāyana knew a Mahābhārata, but their epic was not our present epic. "The Pāṇḍu epic as we have it represents a period subsequent not only to Buddhism 500 B.C., but to the Greek invasion 300 B.C. Buddhist supremacy already decadent is implied by the passages which allude contemptuously to the eḍūkas or Buddhistic monuments as having ousted the temples of the gods. Thus in iii, 190.65 'They will revere eḍūkas, they will neglect the gods;' *ib.* 67, 'the earth shall be piled with eḍūkas, not adorned with god-houses.' With such expressions may be compared the thoroughly Buddhistic epithet, Cāturmahārājika, in xii., 339. 40:

and Buddhistic philosophy as expounded in the same book."

"The Greeks are described as a western people (north-western, with Kāmbojas), famous as fighters." "The Romans, Romakas, are mentioned but once, in a formal list of all possible peoples, ii, 51.17 (Cannibals, Chinese, Greeks, Persians, Scythians, and other barbarians), and stand thus in marked contrast to the Greeks and Persians, Pahlavas, who are mentioned very often. It is clear from this that, while the Greeks were familiar, the Romans were as yet but a name. Further, the distinct prophecy that 'Scythians, Greeks and Bactrians will rule unrighteously in the evil age to come,' which occurs in iii, 188.35 is too clear a statement to be ignored or explained away. When this was written the peoples mentioned had already ruled Hindustan."

The Harivaṁśa is regarded as a part of the Mahābhārata. From the Khoh Copper Plate Inscription of Śarvanātha dating from 532 A.D. we learn that the Mahābhārata in the sixth century A.D. consisted of 100,000 ślokas (Śatasāhasrī-Saṁhitā). As it would have been impossible to speak even approximately of 100,000 verses without the Harivaṁśa, that work must have formed a part of the Mahābhārata in the sixth century A.D. But it is later than the Greek invasion for it mentions the Denarius (see Hopkins, G. E. I., p. 387).

The Purāṇas which relate the Krishṇa story cannot be placed earlier than the third or fourth century A.D. because they contain lists of kings of India down to the Andhra or Gupta monarchs. They cannot perhaps be placed latter than 500 A.D. because all the eighteen Purāṇas are mentioned in the last book of the Mahābhārata which attained its present bulk before the sixth century.

We have independent proof of the existence of the Vāyu, Agni, Mārkaṇḍeya, Bhāgavata and Skanda Purāṇas in the seventh century A.D. (V. Smith's E.H.I., Age of the Purāṇas). The sectarian Upanishads evidently belong to the Purāṇic age.

Whatever may be the date of Krishṇa, he certainly lived before 600 B.C. as he is mentioned in the Chhāndogya Upanishad. To construct a life of the teacher on the evidence of the Harivaṁśa or the Purāṇas which in their present shape are separated by an interval of many centuries from his time, will be building castles on a morass. The same remark applies to the sectarian Upanishads.

The evidence of the Mahābhārata must be used with caution. Though certain parts of the poem are undoubtedly old and contain genuine historical tradition, yet the date of the work as a whole is not far removed from the age of the Purāṇas; and it is not always easy to separate the kernel of the epic from the husk. We shall make use only of those portions of the epic account which are corroborated by external evidence.

The Jātaka and the Jaina Sūtra, too, cannot be implicitly relied on. They are in no sense historical records and contain a good deal of what is untrustworthy. But they have the merit of preserving versions of the Krishṇa story free from the extravaganzas of the epic and the Purāṇas. The Indika and the Mahābhāshya contain important hints, but being post-Buddhistic their value is considerably less than that of the Chhāndogya Upanishad; and it is from the last work that we can expect to get the most authentic information regarding the founder of the Bhāgavata religion.

The unanimity of Hindu, Jaina and Buddhist traditions would seem to indicate that Vāsudeva was really a scion

of the royal family (Yādava, Vrishṇi or Sātvata) of Mathurā ("Upper Madhurā" according to the Ghata Jātaka). The conclusion accords with the statement of Megasthenes regarding the connection of the Indian Herakles with the Sourasenoi and Methora (McCrindle's Megasthenes and Arrian, p. 201). The name of his father is Vasudeva according to the epic and the Uttarādhyayana Sūtra, Vasudeva Ānakadundubhi according to the Purāṇas (Matsya, 46.2; Vāyu, 96, 144) and Upasāgara according to the Ghata Jātaka. The name of his mother was certainly Devakī (Chh. Up., iii, 17, 6; Mh., i, 109, 33; the Uttarādhyayana; the Bhitarī Pillar Inscription of Skanda Gupta). The existence of a brother named Baladeva or Saṅkarshaṇa is vouched for by all the authorities (Mh., ii, 79, 23; Cowell's Jātaka, Vol. IV, p. 51; Uttarādhyayana; *cf.* also the Mahābhāshya passage—*Saṅkarshaṇa dvitīyasya balam Krishṇasya vardhatām*).

The story of Krishṇa's questionable relations with the Gopīs is found only in the Harivaṁśa and the Purāṇas, and is not met with in the Jātaka or the epic, not even in the reviling scene in the Sabhāparva. Even a critic like Hopkins observes (The Religions of India, p. 467): "Modern writers.. ...forget that the lower side of Krishṇa is one especially Purāṇic. In short they read history backwards....In Krishṇa's case the tricky, vulgar, human side is a later aspect, which comes to light most prominently in the Genealogy of Vishṇu and in the Vishṇu Purāṇa, modern works which in this regard contrast strongly with the older epic....It is not till he becomes a great, if not the greatest, god that tales about his youthful performances when he condescended to be born in low life begin to rise."

We have practically no authentic information as to the way in which the childhood of Krishṇa was spent. The

most probable view is that he lived with his preceptor Ghora Āṅgirasa and returned to Mathurā on arriving at adolescence.

The idea of the pastoral Krishṇa and some of the Purāṇic stories about his childhood are evidently borrowed from the Vishṇu Legends in the Vedic literature. In the Rigveda, 1.22.18, Vishṇu is called Gopā. In 1.154.6 we have a reference to the many-horned swiftly-moving cows in the abode of Vishṇu. In the Rigveda, 1.155.6, Vishṇu is described as a youth who is no longer a child. In the Rigveda, 7.99.5, we have the story of Sambara's defeat at the hands of Vishṇu. In the Bodhāyana-Dharma-sūtra (ii, 5.24) Vishṇu is called Govinda and Dāmodara though there is no indication of his identification with Krishna Vāsudeva. But though the idea of a pastoral Krishna was borrowed from the Vedas its development was clearly due to some such tribe as the Ābhiras who were closely connected with the Paṇḍu migration to the south (*cf.* Kanakasabhai's Tamils Eighteen Hundred Years Ago, p., 57).

The story of Krishṇa's quarrel with Kaṁsa has some appearance of reality. It is related in the Jātaka as well as in the epic and is alluded to by Patañjali.

It is not a little surprising that the Jātaka is silent about the connection of Krishṇa with the Pāṇḍavas. The Pāṇḍavas are known to many Jātakas (*e.g.*, the Kuṇāla Jātaka; the Kurudhamma Jātaka; the Dhūmakāri Jātaka; the Dasa Brāhmaṇa Jātaka), but nowhere is there any reference to their connection with Vāsudeva. But the story of Heracles and Pandaia narrated by Greek writers undoubtedly proves the antiquity of the tradition regarding Krishṇa's connection with the Pāṇḍu family. In the Great Epic Krishṇa figures as a friend and counsellor of the Pāṇḍavas, especially in their struggles against Jarāsandha, King of Magadha, and Duryodhana, King of

the Kurus. As said by Smith, the modern critic fails to find sober history in the bardic tales about these feuds. But as deductions regarding Krishṇa's character have been freely made on the strength of these legends, they cannot "only be mentioned and laid aside." Hopkins observes in his Religions of India, p. 388: "the Krishṇa of the epic is a sly, unscrupulous fellow, continually suggesting and executing acts that are at variance with the knightly code of honour." That the remark is one-sided will be apparent to every reader of the Great Epic. Hopkins takes note only of the few episodes in the epic in which Krishṇa's character appears in an unfavourable light, but ignores the numerous episodes in which he appears as the embodiment of all that is good. He himself says that "the priests of Çiva were the last to retouch the poem." (R. I., p. 356, n.) and that "there is as much Çivaism in the poem as there is Vishṇuism" (op. cit., p. 349, n.). Sectarian rancour may have been at the bottom of this darkening of the character of Vāsudeva. Indications of sectarian animosity are not rare in the epic. In xii, 342, 109-116, there is a clear reference to a quarrel between Nārāyaṇa and Śiva.

That a section of the orthodox Brāhmaṇists were not favourably disposed towards Krishṇa and his worship is apparent from the reviling scene of the Sabhāparva :—

Yady ·yaṁ jagataḥ kartā yathainaṁ mūrkha manyase
Kasmānna Brāhmaṇaṁ saṁyagātmānamavagachchhati.

Mbh., ii, 42.6.

If this one (Krishṇa) is the lord of the universe as this fool representeth him, why doth he not regard himself as a Brāhmaṇa ?

Krishṇa is not the only teacher whose character has been blackened by hostile poets. In the Rāmāyaṇa,

ii, 109, 34, Buddha is branded as a thief and an atheist :—

Yathā hi chauraḥ sa tathāhi Buddha
Stathāgataṁ nāstikamatra viddhi.
Tasmāddhi yaḥ śakyatamaḥ prajānāṁ
Sa nāstike nābhimukho budhaḥ syāt.

Although recognised as an *avatāra* in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa he is said to have come down not to establish religion but to delude the enemies of the gods (Bh. Purāṇa, 1, 3, 24) :—

Tataḥ kalau sampravritte sammohāya suradvishām
Buddhonāmnā'ñjanasutaḥ Kīkateshu bhavishyati.

In the Life of Madhva Śaṅkara is represented as an incarnation of a demon (C. N. Krishnaswami Aiyar, Srī Śaṅkarāchārya, p. 5).

In order to get the real history of the Sātvatas or Vrishṇis and their prophet Krishṇa Devakīputra we must turn to the Saṁhitās, Brāhmaṇas and the Upanishads. *Gobala* Vārshṇa is mentioned as a teacher in the Taittirīya Saṁhitā (ii, 11.9.3) and the Jaiminīya Upanishad Brāhmaṇa (i, 6.1) Vārshṇeya is the patronymic of Śūsha in the Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa (iii, 10.9.15). Vārshṇya is the patronymic of a man in the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa (iii, 1.1.4). The Sātvats are mentioned in the Satapatha Brāhmaṇa (xiii, 5, 4, 21) and the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa (viii, 14. 3). The inference is legitimate that the Sātvatas or Vrishṇis were a famous people in the Brāhmaṇic age, and that they had produced at least one teacher of repute in the early Vedic times.

It was among this people that Krishṇa was born. We learn from the Arthaśāstra of Kauṭilya that the Vrishṇis were a Saṅgha or 'corporation.' Their political constitution was therefore similar to that of the ākyas among whom

Gautama Buddha was born. Their irreverent attitude towards Brāhmaṇas is alluded to by all our authorities (Kauṭilya's Arthaśāstra, 1919, p. 12; Mahābhārata, xvi, 15-22; Cowell's Jātaka, Vol. IV, pp. 55-56, Vol. V. p. 138.)

In the Chhāndogya Upanishad Krishṇa is represented as the son of Devakī and a pupil of Ghora Āṅgirasa. The Rishi Ghora Āṅgirasa was a priest of the sun (Kaush. Br., 30.6; Hopkins, R. I., p. 466). The Chhāndogya gives an account of the doctrines which he taught his disciple. In the opinion of the Rishi the *Purusha* (man) may be compared to a *yajña* (sacrifice). When the man is hungry, thirsty and enjoys no pleasure his condition corresponds to the *dīkshā* or initiation, when the performer of a sacrifice has to fast and abstain from all worldly pleasure. When he eats, drinks and enjoys himself his condition corresponds to the *upasada* when the sacrificer breaks the fast and takes food. When he laughs, feeds and indulges in pleasure his state corresponds to the *Stutaśastra* when there are music, singing of hymns and the recitation of sacred books. Penance, almsgiving, straightforwardness, harmlessness, and truthfulness constitute the fee. When the man is conceived in his mother's womb, people say *soshyati* "The mother will give birth," when the child is born, they say *asoshta* "The mother has given birth," these correspond to the use of such expressions in the actual sacrifice. The death of a man corresponds to the final sacrificial bath (*avabhritha*).

Having thus explained this subject (Purushayajña Vidyā) to Krishṇa, the son of Devakī, the Rishi added :— "Let him when his end approaches meditate on these three: 'O Thou art the Imperishable! Thou art the Unchangeable! Thou art the true Essence of Life.'"

Hearing this Krishṇa is said to have "lost all thirst for other knowledge." The sage then quoted two Rig Vedic verses bearing on the subject.

Ādit pratnasya retasaḥ udvayantamasaspari jyotiḥ paśyanta uttaraṁ svaḥ paśyanta uttaraṁ devaṁdevatrā Sūryamaganma jyotiruttamamiti jyotiruttamamiti.

Having beheld the glory of the First Cause—that exquisite light, high above all darkness—and having beheld it also in our own hearts, we attain to that god of gods and noblest of all lights, the Sun—the noblest of all lights.*

The doctrines which Krishṇa learnt from his Guru reappear in the Gītā which is attributed to the former. In the Upanishad Krishṇa learnt that all the acts of a man's life constitute a sort of sacrifice offered to God. With this doctrine we may compare the teaching of the Gītā, ix, 27.

Yat karoshi yadaśnāsi yajjuhoshi dadāsi yat,
Yat tapasyasi Kaunteya tatkurushva madarpaṇam.

In the Upanishad Krishṇa learnt that "*Tapodānamārjjavamahiṁsāsatyavachanam*" are as efficacious (*dharmapushṭikara*) as the fee of the ordinary sacrifice. In the Gītā he teaches—"*Dānam damaścha yajñaścha svādhyāyam tapa ārjjavam ahiṁsā satyam*" are his who is born to godlike endowments (Gītā, xvi, 3).

We shall place side by side a few more passages of the Upanishad, and the corresponding texts of the Bhagavadgītā:—

1. *Antavel āyāmetat trayam pratipadyeta-akshita - asyachyutamasi prāṇaśaṁsitamasīti.*	1. *Antakāle chamāmeva smaraṇmuktvākalevaram*—*Gītā, viii, 5.* *Prayāṇakāle................* *Yadaksharaṁ vedavido vadanti.*—*viii, 10-11.*

* In the Bhīshmastavarāja (Mbh., xii, 47.38-40) Krishṇa is described in similar terms by Bhīshma.

2. *Udvayantamasaspari jyotiḥ paśyanta uttaraṁ svaḥ paśyanta uttaraṁ devaṁdevatrā Śūryam.**

2. *Sarvasya dhātāramachintya rūpamādityavarṇaṁ-tamasaḥ parastāt.* —*viii, 9.*

How are we to account for these coincidences? They cannot be fortuitous. In the Upanishad and in the Gītā we find the same doctrines associated with the name of one and the same person (Krishṇa, the son of Devakī). There is no escape from the conclusion that these doctrines were actually learnt by Krishṇa from Ghora Āṅgirasa, and were transmitted by him to his disciples—the Bhāgavatas—and formed the kernel of the poem known as the Bhagavadgītā.

Though the Gītā contains the doctrines which Krishṇa inherited from his Guru, yet it is by no means a product of the age in which Krishṇa lived. Krishṇa himself is mentioned in one of the oldest Upanishads, while the Gītā presupposes the existence of all the classical Upanishads by its reference to the Brahmasūtras (Gītā, xiii, 5.) :—

Rishibhirbahudhāgītam chhandobhirvividhaiḥ prithak
Brahmasūtrapadaiśchaiva hetumadbhirviniśchitaiḥ.

"Hear and learn from me the Supreme Soul (*Kshetrajña*) that has been celebrated in many ways by Rishis in various metres, and by the words of the Brahmasūtras, which are definite and furnished with reasons." (Max Müller's Indian Philosophy, p. 118.) Here the words *Brahmasūtrapadaiḥ* seem to Max Müller to refer clearly to the recognised title of the Sūtras of Bādarāyaṇa. The

* *Cf.* also Mbh., xii, 47 40 "*Mahatastamasaḥ Pāre Purushaṁ hyatitejasam yam jñātvā mrityumatyeti tasmai jñeyātmane namaḥ*"—*Bhīshmastavarāja.*

words "definite and argumentative" can refer to Sūtras only. Now as the Brahmasūtras refer by the name of Śruti, to the Brihadāraṇyaka, Chhāndogya and other ancient Upanishads, the Gītā must be considered to be posterior to all these works.

Several scholars have attempted to fix the date of the Gītā. According to Telang "the Gītā must have been composed at the latest somewhere about the fourth century B.C." (Introductory Essay to the Bhagavadgītā, p. xcii). Dr. Macnicol observes in his "Indian Theism," p. 76 : "the Gītā is post-Buddhistic, and at least a considerable part of it is pre-Christian."

The Gītā is mentioned in the Kādambarī of Bāṇabhaṭṭa, the court-poet of Harshavardhana, who flourished about the middle of the seventh century A.D. In the Kādambarī one of the equivoques runs as follows :—

"*Mahābhāratamivānantagītākarṇaṇānanditanaram*" — (the royal palace) in which people were gratified by hearing innumerable songs was like the Mahābhārata, in which Nara (Arjuna) was gratified by hearing the Anantagītā."

The testimony of the Khoh Copperplate Inscription of Śarvanātha carries the proof of the antiquity of the Gītā several centuries further back. We learn from that inscription that the Mahābhārata in the sixth century A. D. contained one hundred thousand ślokas. As Professor Macdonell points out, it certainly included the twelfth and thirteenth books, and even the supplementary book called the Harivaṁśa without any of which it would have been impossible to speak even approximately of one hundred thousand verses. As the Gītā is alluded to in the twelfth book (xii, 348.8) it must have existed long before the sixth century A.D. The Anugītā, which forms part of the fourteenth book of the Mahābhārata, also presupposes

the existence of the Bhagavadgītā. There can be no question that the Gītā is one of the older poems of the Great Epic.

The Gītā was certainly known to the author of the Brahmasūtras. The Sūtras, when they refer to Smṛiti, refer clearly to passages taken from the Bhagavadgītā also. Under Sūtra II, 3.45 all the commentators (Śaṅkara, Rāmānuja, and Madhva) cite Gītā, xv, 7. Again under iv, 2.22 all the commentators refer to the same passage, that at the close of the Gītā, Chap. VIII. (Telang's Introductory Essay to the Bhagavadgītā, p. xci). But as the Gītā certainly appeals to the Brahmasūtras (xiii, 5) this reciprocal quotation might be accounted for by their being contemporaneous (Max Müller's Indian Philosophy, p. 119). In his introduction to the sacred laws of Āpastamba Dr. Bühler observes (p. xxviii) "he (Āpastamba) knew not only the unsystematic speculations contained in the Upanishads and Āraṇyakas, but a well defined system of Vedāntic philosophy identical with that of Bādarāyaṇa's Brahmasūtras. The same writer says that "on linguistic grounds Āpastamba cannot be placed later than the third century B. C." (p. xliii). The Brahmasūtras as well as the Bhagavadgītā must therefore have existed at least as early as the third century B.C. From the absence of an allusion to the Vyūha doctrine in the Gītā Sir R. G. Bhandarkar concludes that it was earlier than the Ghasundi and Nānāghāt inscriptions and the Mahābhāshya of Patañjali all of which show acquaintance with the Vyūhavāda.

The precise extent of Krishṇa's own contributions to the doctrines contained in the Gītā cannot easily be ascertained. From the importance attached to "*Dama, Tyāga* and *Apramāda*" in the Bhāgavata inscription of Besnagar, one is tempted to infer that these doctrines

were believed to have been taught by the Master himself. "Dama, Tyāga and Apaiśunam" are inculcated in the Gītā, xvi, 1-2, but are not to be found in the corresponding passage of the Chhāndogya Upanishad (iii, 17.4) which embodies the teaching of Ghora Āṅgirasa.

Chh. Up.	Gītā	Bes. Ins.
Tapodānamārjjavaṁ ahiṁsā satyavachanamiti	*Dānam Damascha* yajñascha svādhyāyam *tapa ārjjavam ahiṁsā satyam* akrodha *styāgaḥ* śāntir *apaiśunam*	Triṇi amuta padāni Suanuṭhitāni nayamti Svaga *dama chāga apramāda*

We have seen that the Bhāgavata religion, the parent of modern Vaishṇavism, arose in the Mathurā region, and that its founder was a scion of the Vrishṇi or Sātvata branch of the Yādava clan and a disciple of the Rishi Ghora Āṅgirasa, a priest of the sun.

There is much truth in Grierson's surmise that the Bhāgavata doctrine was a development of the Sun-worship that was the common heritage of both branches of the Aryan people—the Iranian and the Indian (The Ind. Ant., 1908, p. 253). All the legends dealing with the origin of the Bhāgavata religion are connected in some way or other with the Sun. According to the Śāntiparva of the Mahābhārata, the Sātvata religion had been declared in ancient times by the Sun—*Sātvatam vidhimāsthāya prāk Sūryamukhaniḥsritam* (Mbh., xii, 335. 19). In the Gītā the Bhagavat says :—

Imaṁ Vivasvate yogaṁ proktavānahamavyayam
Vivasvān Manave prāha Manur Ikshvākave'bravīt.

Gītā, iv, 1.

It was one of the solar deities, *viz.*, Vishṇu, who became the One God of the Bhāgavatas. Vāsudeva's Garuḍa

and Chakra are also connected with solar legends. (Macdonell, Vedic Mythology, p. 39.)

We have already noticed the doctrines which Krishṇa learnt from the priest of the sun, and which he undoubtedly transmitted to his disciples, as is proved by their reappearance in the Bhagavadgītā. We have also seen that though the Gītā is not the work of Krishṇa himself or of any of his contemporaries, yet it has preserved, with certain modifications, the actual teachings of the Master and his Guru inflated no doubt by other sayings traditionally attributed to the former. In the history of Bhāgavatism the Gītā occupies a position similar to that which the Dhammachakkappavattana Sutta occupies in Buddhism. The services rendered by the compiler of the Bhagavadgītā to the system of Krishṇa finds its closest parallel in what the author of the Sāṁkhyakārikā did for the system of Kapila.

It is twice asserted in the Śāntiparva of the Mahābhārata that the Bhāgavata or Ekāntika religion was the burden of the teaching of the Gītā :—

Evamesha mahān dharmaḥ sate pūrvaṁ nripottama
Kathito Harigītāsu samāsavidhikalpitaḥ

-Mbh, xii, 346. 11.

Samupoḍheshvanīkeshu Kurupāṇḍavayormridhe
Arjune vimanaskecha gītā Bhagavatā svayam.

Mbh, xii, 348. 8.

The Bhagavadgītā is a work which, in spite of its apparent simplicity, has baffled many commentators and critics. To some it appears full of contradictions ; to others, it is a patchwork of three or four layers set one above another. To others again the central theme is clear, while the work is full of digressions and repetitions. According to Holtzmann it is a Vishṇuite remodelling of

a pantheistic poem; according to Hopkins it is a Krishṇaite version of an old Vishṇuite poem, which in turn was a late Upanishad; according to Deussen it is a late product of the degeneration of the monistic thought of the Upanishads representing the period of transition from theism to realistic atheism; according to Garbe it is the text-book of the Bhāgavatas revised in a Vedāntic sense by the Brāhmaṇas; according to Macnicol it is rightly to be described as an Upanishad which, though it has more unity than most of its kind, contains interpolations emphasizing the view of one school or another. The Vaishṇava view is put forward in the Gītārthasaṁgraha of Yamunāchārya. Yamunā following the ancient oral teaching analysed the work as a consistent exposition of the doctrine of Bhakti supplemented by a description of the Karma and Jñāna Yogas as subordinate to the main theme. The prominent features of the Gītā teaching have been indicated by Dr. Seal in his Comparative Studies in Vaishnavism and Christianity (p. 20), and a full summary of the work has been given by Sir R. G. Bhandarkar in his Vaisnavism. The question of the relation of the Gītā to Christianity will be discussed in my next lecture.

The new religion taught by Krishṇa seems to have been first adopted by his tribe, the Yādavas, especially by the Sātvata sept to which the Master himself belonged. In the Śāntiparva we often find the name Sātvata used as a synonym for Bhāgavata without any ethnic signification whatever. In the Tusām Rock Inscription of the fourth or fifth century A.D. (Corp. Ins. Ind., Vol. III, p. 270) an Āryya-sātvata-yogāchāryya is mentioned.

In the fourth century B.C. the strongest adherents of Vāsudeva were to be found only in the Mathurā region, for we learn from Megasthenes that the people who held Herakles in special honour were the Sourasenoi who possessed

two large cities, Methora and Kleisobora, and through whose country flowed a navigable river called the Jobares (McCrindle, Megasthenes and Arrian, p. 201).

We hear little about the Bhāgavatas in the third century B.C. But we have a good deal of information regarding the condition of the sect in the second century B.C. The preference which Aśoka openly avowed for Buddhism, and his active propaganda undoubtedly brought his favourite doctrine to the front in the third Century B.C., and pushed the rival creeds to a corner.

It is a noticeable fact that the Bhāgavatas are almost wholly ignored in the ancient literary and epigraphic records of the Buddhists in Magadha, but are constantly mentioned from the time of Pāṇini onwards in the records (literary and epigraphic) of the Western part of Northern India. The Anguttara Nikāya mentions the Ājīvikas, the Niganṭhas, the Muṇḍa-Śāvakas, the Jaṭilakas, the Paribbājakas, the Magaṇḍikas, the Tedaṇḍikas, the Aviruddhakas, the Gotamakas and the Devadhammikas (Anguttara, III, pp. 276-77, Dialogues of the Buddha, Part I. p. 220) but never the Vāsudevakas and the Arjunakas. The Seventh Pillar Edict of Aśoka mentions the Brāhmaṇas, the Ājīvikas and the Niganṭhas or Jainas but not the Bhāgavatas. There is a solitary reference to the worshippers of Vāsudeva and Baladeva in a passage of the Niddesa which though of the nature of a commentary is regarded as one of the books of the Pāli Buddhistic canon. (Sir R. G. Bhandarkar's Vaiṣnavism, Śaivism and Minor Religious Systems, p. 3). In this book the Vāsudevakas are mentioned along with the worshippers of birds and beasts.

The omission of the Vāsudevakas or the Bhāgavatas in almost all the early records of the Buddhists in Eastern India is probably due to the fact that they were as yet a local sect confined to the Doāb, included among

the Devadhammikas, and little known in Magadha and its neighbourhood, though well known to the people of Gandhāra and Central India. The early canonical literature of the Buddhists took note only of the important Magadhan sects, while the Pillar Edicts of Aśoka were intended only for the "home provinces" from which the land of the Bhāgavatas was presumably excluded.

Whatever may have been the state of the Bhāgavatas in the third century B.C., we learn from the inscriptions at Ghasundī and Besnagar that in the second century B.C. the Bhāgavata religion had overstepped the boundaries of the Mathurā region and spread to the Indian Borderland, and that its fame had reached the ears of non-Indian peoples some of whom became converts to the faith.

The Ghasundī Stone Inscription (Epigraphia Indica, Vol. X, Appendix, p. 2) records the erection of a pūjā stone wall (Śilāprākāra) at the Nārāyaṇavāṭa by Gājāyana, the son of a Pārāśarī, for Bhagavat Saṅkarshaṇa and Vāsudeva.

The worship of Saṅkarshaṇa is alluded to in Kauṭilya's Arthaśāstra. In the earlier part of the Mahābhārata Saṅkarshaṇa is the elder brother of Krishṇa Vāsudeva (Mbh., ii, 79. 23) and his helper in the struggle against Kaṁsa (Mbh., ii, 14. 34). In the religious philosophy of Bhāgavatism as expounded in the Nārāyaṇīya section of the Śāntiparva, Vāsudeva is identified with the Paramātman (Supreme Soul), while Saṅkarshaṇa is identified with the individual soul or Jīva.

Yaṁ praviśya bhavantīha muktā vai dvija sattamāḥ
Sa Vāsudevo vijñeyaḥ paramātmā sanātanaḥ.

Mbh., xii, 339. 25.

Jñeyaḥ sa eva rājendra jīvaḥ Saṅkarshaṇaḥ Prabhuḥ
Mbh., xii, 339. 40.

In the worship of Saṅkarshaṇa and Vāsudeva we have the germ of the Vyūha doctrine of the Bhāgavatas or Pañcharātras. The doctrine of the Vyūhas is thus stated by Grierson (Ind. Ant., 1908, p. 261). "The Bhagavat Vāsudeva, in the act of creation produces from Himself, not only *prakriti*, the indiscrete primal matter of the Sāṁkhyas, but also a Vyūha or phase of conditioned spirit called Saṅkarshaṇa. From the combination of Saṅkarshaṇa and *prakriti* spring *manas*, corresponding to the Sāṁkhya *buddhi* or intelligence, and also a secondary phase of conditioned spirit called Pradyumna. From the association of Pradyumna with *manas* spring the Sāṁkhya *ahaṅkāra* or consciousness, and also a tertiary phase of conditioned spirit known as Aniruddha. From the association of Aniruddha with ahaṅkāra spring the Sāṁkhya Mahābhūtas or elements with their qualities, and also Brahmā, who, from the elements, fashions the earth and all that it contains.*

We now come to the Besnagar Column Inscription (Epigraphia Indica, Vol. X, Appendix, p. 63). It was found on the base of a detached pillar standing to the north-east of Besnagar in the Gwalior territory. The Greek king Antialkidas mentioned in the inscription is supposed to have reigned in the second century B.C. (V. A.

Sir R. G. Bhandarkar points out that the Gītā contains no allusion to the Vyūhas. It however mentions as Prakritis of Vāsudeva the five elements, the mind, Buddhi, egoism and Jīva, (vii, 4-5). The three Prakritis Jīva, mind and egoism were later on personified into Saṅkarshaṇa, Pradyumna and Aniruddha (Vaiṣṇavism, pp. 12-13). Patañjali probably alludes to the Vyūhas in the passage of the Mahābhāshya—*Janārdanastvātmachaturtha eva*. The first clear enunciation of the Vyūha doctrine occurs in the Nārāyaṇīya section of the Śānti Parva which is older than Śaṅkara and probably also than the Vishṇu Purāṇa—(Sir R. G. Bhandarkar's Vaiṣṇavism, p. 4, and Dr. Seal's Comparative Studies in Vaishṇavism and Christianity, p. 30).

Smith's "A History of Fine Art in India and Ceylon," pp. 65-66).

The first part of the inscription records the erection of a Garuḍadhvaja of Vāsudeva, the god of gods, by the Bhāgavata Heliodora, the son of Diya (Dion), the Takhkhasilāka (native of Taxila), a Yona ambassador, who came from Mahārāja Aṁtalikita (Antialkidas) to Rājan Kāsiputa Bhāgabhadra the saviour (trātāra), who was prospering in the fourteenth year of his reign.

Devadevasa Vā(sude)vasa Garuḍadhvaje ayaṁ
kārite i(a) Heliodoreṇa Bhāga
vatena Diyasa putreṇa Takhkhasilākena
Yona-dūtena āgatena mahārājasa
Aṁtalikitasa upā(ṁ)tā sakāsam Raño
Kāsi putasa Bhāgabhadrasa trātārasa
vasena (chatu) dasemnarājena Vadhamānasa

The second part of the inscription runs as follows:—

Trini amuta padāni (su)anuṭhitāni.
Nayaṁti svaga dama chāga apramāda.

"Three immortal precepts when practised lead to heaven—self-restraint, charity and conscientiousness."

This inscription is one of the most remarkable epigraphic records ever discovered in India. Its importance in the history of Vaishṇavism can scarcely be over-estimated. It proves that the Bhāgavata sect existed in the second century B.C., and that the object of their worship was Vāsudeva, "the god of gods." With the epithet *devadeva* applied by Heliodoros to the object of his devotion we may compare the epithet "*devam devatrā*" applied to Sūrya in the Rig Vedic verses quoted by Ghora Āṅgirasa for the instruction of Krishṇa Devakīputra. The inscription of Heliodoros furnishes the first clear indication of the apotheosis of Krishṇa. According to Sir George

Grierson the deification of Krishṇa was an accomplished fact as early as the time of Pāṇini. "Before the time of Pāṇini," says he, "the founder of the Bhāgavata religion, as has happened to other similar cases in India, became deified, and under his patronymic of Vāsudeva, he was identified with the Bhagavat." But there is nothing in the Ashṭādhyāyī of Pāṇini to warrant such a conclusion. From the context both Vāsudeva and Arjuna of Sūtra iv, 3.98, are to be understood as Kshatriyas (Weber, Ind. Lit., p. 185, n.). Hopkins goes so far as to state that in Pāṇini's Sūtra they were only objects of such worship as is accorded to most Hindu heroes after death (The Great Epic of India, p. 395, n.). The epithet Bhagavat is applied to Vāsudeva not in the original sūtra, but only in the Mahābhāshya of Patañjali. Even in the fourth century B. C. Vāsudeva (the Indian Herakles mentioned by Megasthenes) does not appear to have been regarded as the god of gods, but only as a demi-god. Megasthenes merely states that he was "held in special honour" by the Sourasenoi, but nowhere says that he was worshipped as the god of gods. The allusion to his "birth" among the Indians probably shows that he was still regarded as a human hero. "They (the Indians) assert that Herakles was born among them." "Herakles however who is currently reported to have come as a stranger, is said to have been in reality a native of India" (McCrindle's Megasthenes and Arrian, pp. 39, 200). It is in the Besnagar Inscription that we find Vāsudeva exalted to the rank of the Supreme Deity.

The Garuḍadhvaja points to the close connection between Vāsudeva and Solar worship, because Garuḍa or Suparṇa is connected with Vishṇu and other Sun-gods. In the Bodhāyana Dharma Sūtra (ii, 5,24) "Garutmān" is associated with Nārāyaṇa-Vishṇu.

In the dissertation on Bahuvrīhi compounds, Pāṇ, ii, 2.23, the following occurs in the Mahābhāshya—*Saṅkarshaṇadvitīyasyabalam Krishṇasya vardhatām*, "May the power of Krishṇa, assisted by Saṅkarshaṇa increase." From this we gather that Saṅkarshaṇa was his constant companion and assistant—as might have been inferred from their close association in the Ghasundî Inscription.

Under Pāṇ. Sūtra vi, 3.6. Patañjali quotes "*Janārdanastvātmachaturtha eva*" (Janārdana with himself as the fourth), as an apparent exception to the rule. The line, according to Sir R. G. Bhandarkar, is probably quoted from an existing poem on Krishṇa.

In discussing the evidence, afforded by the Mahābhāshya, for the early existence of the drama, Weber notices the fact that the two legends mentioned as the subjects of representation are Balibandha and Kaṁsabadha, and he points out that, as the first of these subjects is undoubtedly taken from the legend of Vishṇu, it is probably necessary to assume that already Vishṇu and Krishṇa stood in a close relationship (J. R. A. S., 1908, p. 172). Patañjali notices under Pāṇini ii, 2.34 a verse in which it is stated that musical instruments were sounded in the gatherings at the temples of Rāma and Keśava. Rāma and Keśava are ùndoubtedly Balarāma and Krishṇa. The name "Keśava" applied to Krishṇa in this verse clearly indicates that in the second century B.C. he was already identified by the Brāhmaṇas with Nārāyaṇa-Vishṇu, for we learn from the Bodhāyana Dharmasūtra that Keśava was an epithet of Narāyaṇa-Vishṇu (Bodh. Dh. S., ii, 5.24).

The exact period when Krishṇa Vāsudeva was first identified with Nārāyaṇa-Vishṇu cannot be ascertained. As Vishṇu is one of the solar deities, it is not altogether improbable that he had, from the first, some connection with the religious movement associated with the name of

Krishṇa who was himself a disciple of a priest of the Sun. But there is no direct evidence to show that Vishṇu occupied a place in the early Bhāgavata Pantheon. An image of the four-armed Vishṇu appears on a 'Mitra coin' of Pañchāla (Cunningham, Coins of Ancient India, p. 84), but there is nothing to show that the king who issued the coin was a Bhāgavata, *i.e.*, an adherent of the Vāsudeva-Saṅkarshaṇa cult. Vishṇu worship may have been a rival Brāhmaṇical cult. A clear indication of the identification of Vāsudeva with Nārāyaṇa-Vishṇu is, however, found in the Taittirīya Āraṇyaka (x, 1. 6), but the date of the work is uncertain. The last book in which the name of Vāsudeva occurs is admittedly a later addition. It is described as Khilarūpā or supplementary (see Dr. R. L. Mitra's Introduction to the Taittirīya Āraṇyaka, p. 8). According to Dr. Mitra it belongs to the same age with the earliest of the Tantras, *i.e.*, at best the beginning of the Christian era. But, as its existence is presupposed by Āpastamba, we are disposed to agree with Dr. Keith that the Āraṇyaka probably dates from the third century B. C. (J. R. A. S., 1915, p. 840). The appearance of Vāsudeva as a name of Nārāyaṇa-Vishṇu in a Brāhmaṇical work of the third century B. C. is significant. Was it the active propaganda of Aśoka that led the Vedic priests to identify Vāsudeva with Nārāyaṇa-Vishṇu for the purpose of winning over the Bhāgavatas as their allies ?

The Mahābhārata contains indications that it was with great difficulty that the orthodox Brāhmaṇists could be prevailed upon to recognise Krishṇa-Vāsudeva as the God Nārāyaṇa Himself. In the reviling scene in the Sabhāparva we have the reminiscence of an age when the claim of Krishṇa to divine honours was openly denied because he did not happen to be a Brāhmaṇa (ii, 42. 6). In Mbh., i, 197. 33, Vāsudeva is only a hair of Nārāyaṇa.

In i, 228. 20, he is identified with Nārāyaṇa, but this Nārāyaṇa is a Rishi, not the Deity. The identification with the god Nārāyaṇa-Vishṇu was however universally recognised when the epic was complete. (*Cf.* Vanaparva, 189, Bhīsmastavarāja (93-94, 99-100).

Why was Krishṇa identified with Vishṇu and not with any other Vedic god? Here, in seeking to answer this question, there is full scope for the play of conjecture. The following facts seem to be indisputable. Vishṇu was connected from the earliest Vedic times with a work of deliverance for mankind in distress (Rig Veda, vi, 49. 13). In the Satapatha Brāhmaṇa (v, 2. 5. 2-3) we have the remarkable statement that "men are Vishṇus." In the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa Vishṇu figures as the great helper of the gods against the Asuras. Vishṇu assumed the form of a dwarf in order to recover the earth for the gods from the Asuras. (Śat. B., 1, 2, 5, 5; T. B., 1, 6, 1, 5). All these characteristics of Vishṇu eminently fitted him to be the centre of the Avatāra theory propounded in the Bhagavadgītā, iv, 8:—

Paritrāṇāya sādhūnāṁ vināśāya cha dushkritām
Dharmasaṁsthāpanārthāya sambhavāmi yuge yuge.

Was the Brāhmaṇic identification of Vāsudeva with Nārāyaṇa-Vishṇu accepted by the Bhāgavatas in the pre-Christian centuries, or ignored by them as the Buddhists ignored the identification of their Master with the same deity? The name of Nārāyaṇa-Vishṇu is conspicuous by its absence in the Bhāgavata inscriptions of the second century B. C. It is Vāsudeva and Saṅkarshaṇa, and not Vishṇu-Nārāyaṇa, who receive the homage of the faithful. The name Nārāyaṇabāṭa, applied to the village mentioned in the Ghasundî inscription in which the pūjā stone-wall in honour

of Saṅkarshana and Vāsudeva was built, does not necessarily prove any connection between the worship of Nārāyaṇa and the cult of Saṅkarshana and Vāsudeva in the second century B.C.

In the Gītā, which, says Barth, contains probably the oldest dogmatic exposition we possess of Vishṇuism, Vāsudeva, indeed, says, "I am Vishṇu among the Ādityas," but he says in the same breath "I am Śaṅkara among the Rudras," so the passage does not prove any special connection between Vāsudeva and Vishṇu. It should also be noted that Vishṇu is here only an Āditya, and not the 'god of gods.'

The Garuḍadhvaja of the Besnagar inscripion, however, undoubtedly points to the recognition by the Bhāgavatas of Vāsudeva's connection with Nārāyaṇa-Vishṇu. For we learn from the Bodhāyana Dharmasūtra that Garutmān was intimately associated with Nārāyaṇa Vishṇu.

Here I ought to point out that although Nārāyaṇa and Vishṇu are regarded as one and the same deity in the Bodhāyana Dharma Sūtra, the Taittirīya Āraṇyaka and several passages of the Mahābhārata (i, 33.12; xii, 64. 7-8, etc.) they were originally names of distinct deities. We have already seen that Vishṇu is mentioned as early as the Ṛig Veda. He is called in the hymns Gopā, Śipivishṭa, Urukrama, etc., but not Nārāyaṇa. We find the name Nārāyaṇa for the first time in the Satapatha Brāhmaṇa (xii, 3.4.1,) where however it is not in any way connected with Vishṇu.

"Prajāpati once upon a time spoke unto Purusha Nārāyaṇa, 'offer sacrifice! offer sacrifice!' He spoke, 'verily, thou sayest to me "offer sacrifice! offer sacrifice!" and thrice I have offered sacrifice: by the morning service the Vasus went forth, by the midday service the

Rudras and by the evening service the Ādityas; now I have but the offering place, and on the offering place I am sitting.' "

In the Taittirīya Āraṇyaka (x, 11. 1.) Nārāyaṇa appears as "the Deity Eternal, Supreme, and Lord," and receives the name of Hari.

The Great Epic gives different accounts of Nārāyaṇa. In certain passages he is called an ancient Rishi,[1] the son of Dharma, commonly connected with Nara (Mbh., v, 49. 5-20; vii, 200. 57). Nara and Nārāyaṇa are usually identified with Arjuna and Vāsudeva (1. 228. 18; v, 49. 19; etc). In the Mahābhārata, xii, 334. 18, however, Krishṇa is distinguished from Nārāyaṇa.

The following stories are told about the Rishi Nārāyaṇa:—

(1) Once Brihaspati and Uśanas went to Brahman, and also the Maruts with Indra, the Vasus with Agni, the Ādityas, the Sādhyas, the Seven Rishis, the Gandharva Viśvāvasu, the ganas of Apsarases, and having bowed down to Brahman they sat around him. Just then the two ancient Rishis, Nara and Nārāyaṇa, left the place. Brihaspati said to Brahman: "Who are these two that leave the place without worshipping thee?" Brahman said that they were Nara and Nārāyaṇa who had come from the world of men to the world of Brahman; worshipped by the gods and the Gandharvas they exist only for the destruction of the Asuras. Indra went to the spot where those two were practising austerities, accompanied by all the gods headed by Brihaspati. At that time the gods had been very much alarmed in consequence of a war with the Asuras. Indra obtained the boon that Nara and Nārāyaṇa assisted

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[1] The Rishi Nārāyaṇa was the "Seer" of the Purusha Sūkta R. V., 10.90).

him in the battle. Both of them, by their acts, enjoy numerous eternal and celestial regions, and are repeatedly born in the times of war. (Mbh., v, 49. 2-22.)

(2) Nārāyaṇa is older than the oldest ones. For some purpose that Creator of the universe took his birth as the son of Dharma. On Himavat he underwent austerities for sixty-six thousand years, and then for twice that period, and thus he became a Brāhmaṇa and beheld the Supreme Deity Śiva. The lotus-eyed Nārāyaṇa recited a hymn to Mahādeva. Śiva then granted him boons, that neither gods, nor the Asuras, the Mahoragas, the Piśāchas, the Gandharvas, men, the Rākshasas, the birds, the Nāgas, nor any creatures should ever be able to withstand his prowess, 'thou shalt be superior to myself if thou ever goest to battle with me!' That god walked over the earth (as Krishṇa Vāsudeva), beguiling the universe by his illusive power. From the austerities of Nārāyaṇa was born a great muni Nara, who was equal to Nārāyaṇa himself. Arjuna was none else than that Nara. The two Rishis who are said to be older than the oldest gods, take their births in every Yuga for the benefit of the world (Mbh., vii, 200. 57-58).

(3) In the Krita Age, during the epoch of the self-born Manu, the eternal Nārāyaṇa, the soul of the universe took birth as the son of Dharma in a quadruple form, namely, as Nara, Nārāyaṇa, Hari and the self-create Krishṇa. Amongst them all Nara and Nārāyaṇa underwent the severest austerities by repairing to the Himālayan retreat known by the name of Badari (Mbh., xii, 334. 9-10).

In certain other passages of the Great Epic, Nārāyaṇa is the name of a god usually identified with Vishṇu, and not associated with Nara. The god Nārāyaṇa took away the *amrita* from the Asuras and made Garuḍa his vehicle and emblem.

In the episode of the Śvetadvīpa Nārāyaṇa is the name of the strange God of the White Islanders (Mbh., xii, 336-27-55). "On the northern shores of the ocean of milk there is an island of great splendour called by the name of White Island. The men that inhabit that island have complexions as white as the rays of the moon and are devoted to Nārāyaṇa."

"Incapable of being seen, in consequence of his dazzling effulgence, that illustrious Deity can be beheld only by those persons that in course of long ages succeed in devoting themselves wholly and solely to Him."

Sir R. G. Bhandarkar takes Nārāyaṇa to mean the resting place or goal of Nāra or a collection of Naras, and says that this god has a cosmic character and is not a historical or a mythological individual. This idea of Nārāyaṇa was developed in the period of the Brāhmaṇas and the Araṇyakas till at last this god was raised to the dignity of the Supreme Soul (Vaiṣṇavism, pp. 30-31).

Whatever might have been the attitude of the Bhāgavatas towards Nārāyaṇa and Vishṇu in the age of the Taittirīya Āraṇyaka, it is certain that, unlike the Buddhists, they ultimately did accept the identification of their master with these deities, as is evident not only from the Garuḍa Pillar Inscription, but from the Nārāyaṇīya, the Tusām Rock Inscription, and the epigraphic records of the "Paramabhāgavata" emperors of the Gupta line.

Besides the inscriptions discovered at Ghasuṇḍî and Besnagar, and the Mahābhāshya of Patañjali, we have another valuable record which testifies to the growing importance of Bhāgavatism in the period immediately preceding the Christian era. This is the famous Nānāghāṭ Cave Inscription (Lüders, inscription No. 1112, Epigraphia Indica, Vol. X, Appendix, p. 121). It records, after an

invocation of Dhamma, Ida (Indra), Saṅkarshaṇa, and Vāsudeva, the descendants of Chanda, the four Lokapālas Yama, Varuṇa, Kubera, Vāsava, the fees given at various sacrifices by the daughter of the Mahārathi Kalalāya, the scion of the Aṁgiya family, the wife of..............Siri, the mother of prince Vedisiri, the son of a king who is called Lord of Dakshiṇāpatha, and mother of Sati Sirimata.

This inscription is remarkable in many respects. It is not a Bhāgavata record like the inscriptions discovered at Ghasundî and Besnagar. The reference to sacrificial fees paid to priests for the performance of sacrifices proves incontestably that the donor was a Brāhmaṇist. The deities mentioned are mostly Brāhmaṇic. The appearance among them of the names of Saṅkarshaṇa and Vāsudeva shows that a rapprochement between the Brāhmaṇists and the Bhāgavatas had already begun. The older attitude of the orthodox school towards Vāsudeva is reflected in the reviling scene of the Sabhāparva of the Mahābhārata, 42·6 :—

Yadyayaṁ jagataḥ kartā yathainaṁ mūrkha manyase
Kasmānna Brāhmaṇaṁ samyagātmānamavagachchhati

In Mbh., ix, 60. 23, Vāsudeva is painted as a pious hypocrite (*cf. Dharmachchhalamapi śrutvā Keśavāt sa viśāmpate*).

The newer attitude is reflected in the passages where Vāsudeva is represented as a friend of the Brāhmaṇas (xii, 47. 94, *Namo Brahmaṇyadevāya go brāhmaṇahitāyacha*), the origin of the Vedas (xii, 210.9, *Brahmaṇomukham*). Persons conversant with the Vedas know Him as Vishṇu (xii, 210.10 *Purushaṁ sanātanaṁ Vishṇuṁ yaṁ taṁ Vedavido viduḥ*).

The Nānāghāṭ Inscription shows further that the Bhāgavata religion was no longer confined to Northern

invocation of Dhamma, Ida (Indra), Saṅkarshaṇa, and Vāsudeva, the descendants of Chanda, the four Lokapālas Yama, Varuṇa, Kubera, Vāsava, the fees given at various sacrifices by the daughter of the Mahārathi Kalalāya, the scion of the Aṁgiya family, the wife of..............Siri, the mother of prince Vedisiri, the son of a king who is called Lord of Dakshiṇāpatha, and mother of Sati Sirimata.

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India, but had spread to the south and had captured the hearts of the sturdy people of Mahārāshṭra. From Mahārāshṭra it was destined to spread to the Tamil country and then flow back with renewed vigour to the remotest corners of the Hindu world.

In J. R. A. S., 1911, p. 960, Dr. Bühler observes that the recovery of the Vaikhānasa Dharma Sūtra permits him fully to prove the correctness of Kern's identification of the Ājīvikas with the Bhāgavatas.

The theory of Kern and Bühler has been ably controverted by Prof. D. R. Bhandarkar in the Indian Antiquary, 1912, p. 286, et seq. He says that the real meaning of the extract from Utpala's commentary has been misunderstood by Kern and Bühler. Utpala does not say that the word Ājīvika means Nārāyaṇāśrita. He merely says that in the text on which he is commenting the word Ājīvika is used as an *Upalakshaṇā* to denote Nārāyaṇāśrita. *Upalakshaṇā* means a mark indicative of something that the word itself does not actually express. The view of Bhandarkar is now generally accepted by scholars (*cf.* V. Smith's Early History of India, third edition, p. 166, n.).

Bhāgavatism and Jainism.

The Jainas represnt Vāsudeva as a near relation of the Arhat Arishṭanemi (Uttarādhayana, Lec. xxii). They include Vāsudeva and Baladeva among the sixty-three Śalākā-Purushas (Hemachandra's Trishashṭiśalākā-purusha-charita; Rādhākānta Deva's Sabdakalpadruma, p. 1492; Jacobi, Sthavirāvalīcharita, p. 3; Barth, Religions of India, p. 167, n.). The Śalākā-purushas are the great personages who, according to the belief of the Jainas, have, since the present order of things, risen in the history of the world, and directed or influenced its course; they comprise the twenty-four Tīrthakaras, the twelve Chakravartins, the nine Vāsudevas, the nine Baladevas, and the nine Prati-vāsudevas.

In the Chhāndogya Upanishad Ghora Āṅgirasa while instructing his disciple Krishṇa placed certain moral

states on an equality with certain parts of the sacrificial procedure. Among these moral states Ahiṁsā is specially mentioned. The Ahiṁsā doctrine foreshadowed here was taken up by the Jainas.

Dr. Keith remarks in the J.R.A.S. 1915, pp. 842-843, "The (Jaina) faith is deeply permeated with Hindu influences, and especially with influences of Kṛṣṇa worship. Of this there can be no more striking proof than the taking over of the Kṛṣṇa legend and its reworking in a tedious shape; its importance is seen in the fact that the legend of Mahavīra's birth is entirely derived from that of Kṛṣṇa's birth." *Cf.* Jacobi, Jaina Sūtras, Part I, S.B.E., Vol. XXII, pp. 218—230, and Vishṇu Purāṇa, V, 1, 72 et seq.

Dr. Macnicol says (Indian Theism, p. 68) "in its original democratic character and in its universalism, we have two notes of theism which the sect of Mahavīra may have learned from such worship as that of Vāsudeva-Krishṇa."

Bhāgavatism and Buddhism.

We now come to the important question of Bhāgavata influence on Buddhism. We have already stated that the story of Vāsudeva forms the subject of one of the Buddhist Jātakas, *viz.*, the Ghata Jātaka. Ghata, the brother of Vāsudeva, is identified with Buddha himself, while Vāsudeva is identified with Sāriputta (Cowell's Jātaka, Vol. IV, p. 57).

There can be no doubt of the immense influence which Bhāgavatism exercised upon Buddhism. The Ahiṁsā doctrine foreshadowed in the Chhāndogya Upanishad was afterwards taken up by the Buddhists as well as the Jainas. The Saddharmapuṇḍarīka contains a number of

passages which remind us of the Gītā. In Saddharma, xv, 7-9, Buddha says: "Repeatedly am I born in the world of the living .... I see how the creatures are afflicted .... I will reveal to them the true law." This looks like an echo of the Gītā, iv. 7-8, "Whensoever piety languishes, and impiety is in the ascendant, I create myself. I am born age after age, for the protection of the good, for the destruction of evil-doers, and the establishment of piety."

The "Awakening of Faith" of the famous Buddhist writer Aśvaghosha also shows abundant traces of the influence of the Bhagavadgītā. Teitaro Suzuki, the translator of the "Awakening of Faith," observes (p. 44): "A supplementary point to be noticed in Açvaghosha is the abundance of similar thoughts and passages with those in the Bhagavadgītā." The same writer adds that "it is an open question which of the two has an earlier date." But a comparison of the styles of Aśvaghosha's Buddhacharita and of the Bhagavadgītā leaves no room for doubt that the Gītā preceded Aśvaghosha. The Gītā belongs to an age considerably prior to the epoch of the artificial department of Sanskrit literature to which the Buddhacharita belongs. In its general character, the style impresses one as quite archaic in its simplicity. It is considered by a critic like Hopkins to be one of the older poems of the Mahābhārata. We have adduced reasons for believing that it was probably composed three centuries before the Christian era, whereas "by the unanimous testimony of the best authorities we yet have on the later forms of Buddhism, that is to say, the Tibetan and Chinese historiographers, Aśvaghosha lived in the time of the most famous of the Kushān kings, Kanishka." (Rhys Davids, Buddhist India, pp. 314-315.) That Aśvaghosha was fairly acquainted with the Krishṇa story is proved by his reference to the famous

deeds of Śauri (Krishṇa) which mere warriors were unable to perform :—

Āchāryyakaṁ yogavidhau dvijānāmaprāptamanyair Janako jagāma.
Khyātāni karmāṇi cha yāni Śaureḥ Śūrādayasteshvab-alūbabhūvuḥ.

Buddhacharita, Canto. I, 50.

In the Gītā, ix. 19, Krishṇa says : "I am immortality and also death ; and I, O Arjuna ! am that which is and that which is not." In the Awakening of Faith we have the following passage :—"The Soul as birth-and-death comes forth from the Tathāgata's womb. But the immortal (*i.e.*, suchness) and the mortal (*i.e.*, birth-and-death) coincide with each other." (Teitaro Suzuki's translation, pp. 60-61.)

In the Gītā, (iv. 14 and 18) Krishṇa teaches :— "Actions defile me not. I have no attachment to the fruit of actions." "He is wise among men, he is possessed of devotion, who sees action in inaction, and inaction in action" ; according to Suzuki this teaching exactly coincides with the practical side of Aśvaghosha's doctrine of Suchness (bhūtatathatā). (The Awakening of Faith, p. 94, n.).

Aśvaghosha (op. cit. p. 145) says that "After this reflexion they should make great vows (mahāpraṇidhāna), and with full concentration of spiritual powers think of Buddha and the Bodhisattvas. When they have such a firm conviction, free from all doubts, they will assuredly be able to be born in the Buddha country beyond, when they pass away from the present life, and seeing there Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, to complete their faith and to eternally escape from all evil creations (apāya). The same idea of salvation, says Suzuki, is expressed in the Bhagavadgītā, viii. 5-7 : "He who leaves this body and departs (from this world) remembering me in (his) last

moments, comes into my essence. There is no doubt of that. Also whichever form (of deity) he remembers when he finally leaves this body, to that he goes, O son of Kuntī! having been used to ponder on it. Therefore, at all times remember me, and engage in battle. Fixing your mind and understanding on me, you will come to me, there is no doubt."

Dr. Macnicol in his Indian Theism (p. 65) agrees with Senart that "the Buddhist tradition certainly moves in a Krishṇaite atmosphere." Senart and Poussin are of opinion that there was an intimate relation between the new way of deliverance and the old theistic cults of India, and affirm with confidence that devout worshippers of Nārāyaṇa had much to do in the making of the Buddhist doctrine even from its inception (Poussin's Opinions, pp. 241-8).

Mr. Jayaswāl points out (Ind. Ant., 1918, March, p. 84) that the custom of worshipping footprints had been already an old institution before the time of the Buddha. It probably originated in the Vedic legend of Vishṇu's stepping over the earth, and was borrowed by the Buddhists. Aurṇavābha, a predecessor of Yāska, takes the verse '*idaṁ Vishṇur vichakrame tredhā nidadhe padam*' in the sense that Vishṇu literally and physically in the past strode in the manner described by Śākapūṇi, stepping over the earth, horizon and sky, and "in ascending (he stepped) at the Vishṇupada on the Gayā peak" (*Samārohaṇe Vishṇupade Gayaśi rasītyaurṇavābhaḥ*).

Bhāgavatism and Christianity.

The appearance in India of a religion of Bhakti was, in the opinion of several eminent Western scholars, an event of purely Christian origin. Christianity, according to these scholars, exercised an influence of greater or less account on the worship and story of Krishṇa.

P. Georgi in his *Alphabetum Tibetanum* stated that 'Krishṇu' is only "a corruption of the name of the Saviour the deeds correspond wonderfully with the name, though they have been impiously and cunningly polluted by most wicked impostors." He supposed that the borrowing took place from the "apocryphal books concerning Jesus Christ," and especially from the Manichaeans. But even Weber was forced to admit that his proofs were very wild. He derived the names Ayodhyā, Yudishṭhira, Yādava, from Juda, Arjuna from John, Durvasas from Peter.

Sir William Jones went the length of asserting (As. Res., i. 274) that "the Spurious gospels which abounded in the first ages of Christianity, had been brought to India, and the wildest part of them repeated to the Hindus, who ingrafted them on the old fable of Ceśava, the Apollo of Greece."

Polier, Mythologie, i. 445, sought at least in the Victory over Kāliya, "a travesty of the tradition of the Serpent, the tempter who introduces death into the world, and whose head the Saviour of the human race shall crush."

Kleuker, in his treatise on the history and the antiquities of Asia, says that he can believe that the Krishṇa story did not take its origin from the Gospels, but it is quite possible that it has borrowed something from them.

In later times there were special theological reasons unfavourable to the discussion of the question of the indebtedness of Krishṇaism to Christianity. Writers seemed to fear that some of the sanctity of Christianity would be lost if something borrowed from it was found in the Krishṇa cult.

The discussion of the question was revived by the great German writer Weber in his essay, "An investigation into the origin of the festival of Krishṇa Janmāshṭamī."

(Indian Antiquary, 1874). Weber's theory of the indebtedness of Krishṇaism to Christianity rests on the following points (Ind. Ant., 1873, p. 285; Ind. Ant, 1874, "Weber on the Krishṇa Janmāshṭamī") :—

(1) The worship of Krishṇa as sole God is one of the latest phases of Indian religious systems, of which there is no trace in Varāhamihira.

(2) This worship of Krishṇa as sole God has no intelligible connection with his earlier position in the Brāhmaṇical legends. In the Chhāndogya Upanishad Krishṇa is an "eager scholar." In the Mahābhārata he is a brave hero and warrior of the Vrishṇi race. But in the same epic he appears further exalted to semi-divine rank as the wise friend and counsellor of the Pāṇḍavas, of supernatural power and wisdom. There is a gap between the earlier and later positions of Krishṇa which nothing but the supposition of an external influence can account for.

(4) The legend, in the Mahābhārata, of Śvetadvīpa and the revelation which is made there to Nārada by Bhagavat Himself shows that Indian tradition bore testimony to such an influence.

(5) The legends of Krishṇa's birth, the solemn celebration of his birthday, in the honours of which his mother Devakī participates, and finally his life as a herdsman, a phase the furthest removed from the original representation, can only be explained by the influence of Christian legends.

As to the first point, the Besnagar Inscription proves conclusively that the divinity of Krishṇa Vāsudeva is not a post-Christian innovation, but is as old at least as the second century B. C. In that famous inscription Vāsudeva is called "Devadeva," *i.e.*, the God of gods, and his votary Heliodoros, the ambassador of the Greek king Antialkidas, is called a Bhāgavata. Thus not only the

deification of Krishṇa, but the existence of the Bhāgavata sect preceded the birth of Jesus Christ by at least two centuries. The testimony of the Ghasundî Inscription and of the Mahābhāshya of Patañjali points to the same conclusion. The identification of Vāsudeva and the god Vishṇu is clearly implied in the Taittirīya Āraṇyaka (x. 1, 6) which, according to Dr. Keith, cannot be placed later than the third century B. C. The Āraṇyaka was known to Āpastamba who must have lived at least three centuries before Christ (Bühler's Introduction to the Sūtras of Āpastamba, pp. xxv, xliii).

As regards the second point, Telang rightly points out that the transition from a great human hero to a hero regarded as an incarnation of the Deity is neither so unusual nor inexplicable that we must imagine some external influence to explain it. What external influence was at work in the apotheosis of Kapila, of Pārśvanātha or of Buddha? Even if we assume, for argument's sake, that there was some external influence, it could not have been the influence of Christianity, because Krishṇa was already worshipped as the God of gods two centuries before the birth of Christ.

We now come to the legend of Śvetadvīpa which occurs in the Śāntiparva of the Mahābhārata (xii. 336-339). Uparichara Vasu performs an Aśvamedha sacrifice in which Brihaspati is the priest, and Ekata, Dvita, and Trita act as overseers (Sadasya). No animals are killed on the occasion, and the oblations are prepared in accordance with the precepts of the Āraṇyakas. The Bhagavat, the God of gods, being invisible, takes the offering and carries it off without showing Himself to Brihaspati. Brihaspati is angry, when Ekata, Dvita and Trita explain to him that God is to be seen only by those on whom He shows His Grace. They themselves once went to the

White Island (Śveta dvīpa) to see Hari or Nārāyaṇa, performed austerities for a long time, but were told that Nārāyaṇa was not to be seen by them, as they were not His Bhaktas. They give an account of the White Island and its inhabitants. We have next an account of Nārada's visit to the Island and his success in seeing Nārāyaṇa. Weber supposes that in this narrative of the three Rishis Ekata, Dvita and Trita, we have a description of a Christian worship that certain Hindu pilgrims might have witnessed.

Lassen concurs in the belief that some Brāhmaṇas became acquainted with Christianity in some country lying to the north of India, and brought home some Christian doctrines. This he considers to be supported by :—

(*a*) the name of the White Island and the colour of its inhabitants, so different from that of the Indians ;

(*b*) the ascription to these people of the worship of an Unseen God, while the Indians of the same period had images of their deities ;

(*c*) the attribution to them of faith, the efficiency of which is not an ancient Indian tenet ;

(*d*) the value attributed to prayer, which is a less important element in Indian than in Christian rites ; and

(*e*) the fact that the doctrine which they learnt is described as one only made known to the Indians at a late period.

Lassen holds it as the most likely supposition that Parthia was the country where the Brāhmaṇas met with Christian missionaries. Weber prefers Alexandria. According to Dr. Macnicol it probably refers to some Christian settlement to the north of India. Kennedy says (J. R. A. S. 1907, p. 482) "The direction can only point to some place beyond the great mountain ranges, to Bactria, perhaps to Lake Issykul."

Dr. Seal in his "Comparative Studies in Vaishṇavism and Christianity," observes "This Nārāyaṇīya record, in my opinion, contains decisive evidence of an actual journey or voyage undertaken by some Indian Vaishṇavas to the coasts of Egypt or Asia Minor, and makes an attempt in the Indian eclectic fashion to include Christ among the Avatārs or Incarnations of the Supreme Spirit Nārāyaṇa, as Buddha came to be included in a later age" (p. 30). He refers to Mbh., xii. 335. 11.

Chhatrākritiśīrshā meghaughaninādāḥ
Samamushkachatushkā rājīvachchhadapādāḥ
Shashtyā dantairyuktāḥ Śuklairashtābhirdaṁshtrābhirye
Jihvābhirye Viśvavaktraṁ lelihyante sūryaprakhyam.

According to Dr. Seal (op. cit. p. 53) "the Eucharist is here described. The inhabitants drink up the Logos *Sūryaprakhyaṁ Viśvavaktraṁ devaṁ.* All these epithets are applicable to the Logos, especially as conceived by the Syrian Christians and Gnostics."

The highly imaginative character of the description of the White Island and its inhabitants, as well as some indications in the narrative that it is not to be taken literally, has however convinced some scholars, that the story is a mere flight of fancy. The Śvetadvīpa is said to lie to the north of the Ocean of Milk, and to the north-west of Mount Meru, and above it by 32,000 Yojanas (Mbh., xii. 335.8-9). "I should like to know," says Telang, "what geography has any notion of the quarter of this earth where we are to look for that sea of milk and mount of gold. Consider next the description of the wonderful people inhabiting this wonderful Dvīpa.

Te Sahasrārchchishaṁ devaṁ pravišanti sanātanam
Anindriyā nirāharā anishpandāh sugandhinaḥ.

xii. 336.29.

It will be news to the world, that there were in Alexandria or elsewhere a whole people without any organs of sense, who ate nothing, and who entered the Sun—whatever that may mean! Remember, too, that the instruction which Nārada receives in this wonderful land is not received from its inhabitants, but from Bhagavat, from God Himself. Nor let it be forgotten, that the doctrines which the Deity there announces to Nārada cannot be shown to have any connexion whatever with Christianity * * * the whole of the prelection addressed to Nārada bears on its face its essentially Indian character, in the references to the three qualities, to the twenty-five primal principles, to the description of final emancipation as absorption or entrance into the Divinity, and various other matters of the like character." (Introductory Essay to the Bhagavadgītā, p. xxxv.)

Even assuming that the story is not a 'flight of fancy,' there are still grave reasons for doubting the correctness of Weber's theory.

"The fact," says Hopkins (The Religions of India, p. 432), "that the 'one god' is already a hackneyed phrase of philosophy; that there is no resemblance to a trinitarian god; that the hymn sung to this one god contains no trace of Christian influence, but is on the other hand thoroughly native in tone and phraseology, being as follows: 'Victory to thee thou god with lotus eyes; Reverence to thee, thou creator of all things; Reverence be to thee, O Vishṇu (Hrishīkeça); thou Great Person; first born one'; all these facts indicate that if the White Islanders are indeed to be regarded as foreigners worshipping a strange god, that god is strictly monotheistic and not trinitarian. Weber lays stress on the expression 'first-born,' which he thinks refers to Christ; but the epithet is old (Vedic), and is common, and means no more than 'primal deity.'"

The name of the White Island and the colour of its inhabitants ("śvetāḥ Pumāṁsaḥ") do not necessarily prove that some Christian settlement (Parthia) is meant Hopkins says (the Great Epic of India, p. 116) that the white men of the White Island 'in the north-west' may be Kashmere Brāhmaṇas. The question whether Lassen or Hopkins is right cannot be definitely settled. There seems no more reason to reject Hopkins' theory than to accept the theory of Lassen.

As regards the second point of Lassen we need only point out that the God of the White Islanders was invisible only to those who were not His Bhaktas—*na sa śakyastvabhaktena drashṭuṁ devaḥ kathañchana* (Mbh., xii. 336-54), but could be seen by His Bhaktas. He was therefore not altogether an Unseen God. Moreover it has not been proved that all the Indians of the period when the Nārāyaṇīya was composed had images of their deities. The most advanced philosophers and the Rishis who meditated upon God in the woods usually dispensed with images. The 'worship of an unseen God' was familiar to the Indians from the age of the Rig Veda (*cf.* the hymns to Hiraṇyagarbha).

Lassen opines that the efficiency of 'faith' is not an ancient Indian tenet. This is hardly correct. Dr. Seal observes (Comparative Studies in Vaishnavism and Christianity, p. 5) "The Vedic Hymns are replete with sentiments of piety and reverence (Bhakti and Sraddhā) in the worship of the gods.......The Upāsanā Kāṇḍas of the Araṇyakas and Upanishads lay the foundations of the Bhakti-Mārga, Way of Devotion or Faith." (p. 8.)—The Pātañjala Yoga Sūtras lay down devout worship of the Lord as the surest and swiftest means of attaining Yoga as a means to Emancipation. Sir R. G. Bhandarkar also proves that Bhakti had a purely Indian origin (Vaiṣṇavism,

pp. 28-29). "The thought of India," says Dr. Keith, (J.R.A.S. 1915, p. 834), "started from a religion which had in Varuṇa a god of decidedly moral character, and the simple worship of that deity with its consciousness of sin and trust in the divine forgiveness is doubtless one of the first roots of Bhakti" (loving faith). "There is much," says Dr. Macnicol (Indian Theism, p. 11), "in the prayers and hymns to Varuṇa that brings back to one who knows it the lofty language of Hebrew seers and psalmists." Prof. Garbe, in his translation of the Bhagavadgītā (pp. 29 ff.), observes that a monotheistic religion, in which the object of worship was looked upon as a kindly, not a terrible, deity, would naturally beget the feelings of Bhakti in the hearts of his worshippers. Pāṇini actually speaks of Bhakti dedicated to Vāsudeva.

The statement of Lassen that prayer is less important an element in Indian than in Christian rites is also not accurate. From the age of the Rig Veda to that of the latest Purāṇas prayer formed an important part of Hindu worship. "There is in fact," says Professor Macdonell (Macdonell's Vedic Mythology, p. 27), "no hymn to Varuṇa and the Ādityas in which the prayer for forgiveness does not occur, as in the hymns to other deities the prayer for worldly goods."

How e'er we who thy people are,
O Varuṇa, thou shining god,
Thy rita injure day by day,
Yet give us over nor to death,
Nor to the blow of angry foe.

R.V., i. 25.1, 2 (Hopkins' translation).

It is clear from what we have said that the doctrines which the travellers to the Śvetadvīpa learnt were not imported to India at a late period.

As regards the Nārāyanīya verse (Mbh., xii 335.11) referred to by Dr. Seal, the following translation is given by Pratāpchandra Rāy, C.I.E. (Çāntiparva, Vol. II, pp. 744-745) :—

"Their heads seem to be like umbrellas. Their voices are deep like that of the clouds. Each of them has four mushkas. The soles of their feet were marked by hundreds of lines. They had sixty teeth all of which were white (and large) and eight smaller ones. They had many tongues. With those tongues they seemed to lick the very Sun whose face is turned towards every direction."

Where are we to find the men with four mushkas, and sixty teeth? The whole description seems to be a flight of fancy. The omission of the name of Buddha from the list of the Avatāras given in the Nārāyaṇīya (Mbh., xii. 339, 103-104) shows that the author was singularly wanting in that spirit of eclecticism, which, according to Dr. Seal, led him to include Christ among the Avatāras of Nārāyaṇa.

We have now to consider whether there is any reliable evidence of Christian influence on the legends of the Child Krishṇa and on the celebration of his birth-day.

Weber observes (Ind. Ant., 1874, p. 21): "The most difficult point in connection with the festival of the birth-day of Krishṇa lies clearly in the description, and particularly in the pictorial representation, of him as a suckling at his mother's breast, and in the homage paid to the mother, represented as lying on a couch in a cow-house, who has borne him, 'the lord of the world,' in her womb. Such a representation of the god is a strange contrast to the other representations of him—to that of the epos, for example, in which he appears as a warrior-hero and is moreover, the only thing of its kind in India."

According to the great German scholar, the birth-day festival of Krishṇa, and the pictorial representation of him

as a suckling at his mother's breast, which forms an integral part of that festival, are borrowed from the legends regarding the Virgin and the representations of the Madonna lactans, and came to India from the West at a time when "The Madonna and the child" had already on their side won a firm and sure place in the Christian ritual.

Weber adds that "in the train of the birth-day festival we must suppose that other legendary matters came to India which are found in the accounts of the Harivaṁśa, of the Jaimini Bhārata, and in some interpolated passages of the Mahābhārata, in the Purāṇas, especially in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa and its offshoots which describe and embellish the birth and childhood of Krishṇa with notices which remind us irresistibly of Christian legends. Take, for example, the statement of the Vishṇu Purāṇa that Nanda, the foster-father of Krishṇa, at the time of the latter's birth, went with his pregnant wife Yaśodā to Mathurā to pay taxes (*cf.* Luke II, 4, 5) or the pictorial representation of the birth of Krishṇa in the cowstall or shepherd's hut, that corresponds to the manger, and of the shepherds, shepherdesses, the ox and the ass that stand round the woman as she sleeps peacefully on her couch without fear of danger. Then the stories of the persecutions of Kaṁsa, of the massacre of the innocents, of the passage across the river (Christophoros), of the wonderful deeds of the child, of the healing-virtue of the water in which he was washed, etc., etc. Whether the accounts given in the Jaimini Bhārata of the raising to life by Krishṇa of the dead son of Duḥśalā, of the cure of Kubjā, of her pouring a vessel of ointment over him, of the power of his look to take away sin, and other subjects of the kind came to India in the same connection with the birth-day festival may remain an open question."

Weber does not stand alone in his view concerning the influence of Christianity on the legends of Krishṇa. "The coincidences," says Hopkins (the Religions of India, p. 430), "as some scholars marvellously regard them, between the legends of Christ and Krishṇa are too extraordinary to be accepted as such. They are direct importations, not accidental coincidences. .... It remains only to ask from which side is the borrowing? Considering how late are these Krishṇa legends in India there can be no doubt that the Hindu borrowed the tales, but not the name; for the last assumption is quite improbable because Krishṇa (=Christ?) is native enough, and Jishṇu is as old as the Rig Veda."

"About the first century of the Christian era," says Sir R. G. Bhandarkar (Ind. Ant., 1912, p. 15), "the boygod of a wandering tribe of the Ābhiras came to be identified with Vāsudeva. In the course of their wanderings eastward from Syria or Asia Minor they brought with them, probably, traditions of the birth of Christ in a stable, the massacre of the innocents, etc., and the name Christ itself. The name became recognised as Krishṇa, as this word is often pronounced by some Indians as Krista or Kusta. And thus the traditional legends brought by the Ābhiras became engrafted on the story of Vāsudeva Krishṇa of India."

Dr. Macnicol is inclined to believe that about the middle of the seventh century Nestorian missions (which are believed to have entered India from the north in the year 639) may have brought stories of the child Christ as well as pictures and ritual observances which affected the story of Krishṇa as related in the Purāṇas, and the worship of Krishṇa especially in relation to the celebration of his birth festival. To this belongs the birth in a cow-house among cattle, the massacre of the innocents,

the story that his foster-father Nanda was travelling at the time to Mathurā to pay tax or tribute to Kaṁsa, and other details to be found in the various Purāṇas and in the Jaimini Bhārata.

No one can help being struck by the points of resemblance between the story of the child Krishṇa and that of the child Christ. When one investigates, however, one finds that the hypothesis of a plagiarism rests on a weak basis.

With regard to the birth-day festival of Krishṇa, the representation of him as a suckling at his mother's breast, and the homage paid to the mother, Weber himself points out that the festival of the Rāmanavamî presents many striking analogies to the Krishṇa-janmāshtamî. The Rāmāyaṇa, which is a pre-Christian work according to Prof. Macdonell (Sanskrit Literature, pp. 307-310), gives a detailed account of Rāma's birth, and in one passage of that epic Rāma is represented as "resting in the lap of his mother" *māturaṅkagata*. (Ind. Ant., 1874, p. 21, n.). Kennedy observes (J. R. A. S. 1907, p. 484) : "There is no Christian representation of the suckling mother before the twelfth century, but there is a much earlier Hindu one. At Elūra we have a bas relief of the seven divine mothers each with her child on her knee or beside her; and Varāhî, the third of the seven, is giving suck to her infant." According to Piper's representation, the adoration of virgin Mary was even in the fourth century A. D. far from prominent, and we are to date its decisive introduction from the Nestorian disputes in the fifth century. (Ind. Ant., 1874, p. 47). If the decisive introduction of the worship of the Virgin dated from the fifth century, its propagation in distant foreign lands must have taken place in a later age. But the association of Krishṇa with Devakī, his mother, is, as is well known, as old as the

Chhāndogya Upanishad. We learn from the Bhitarî Pillar Inscription that early in the fifth century A. D. Devakī already occupied a prominent place in the Krishṇa cultus. In his *History of Fine Art in India and Ceylon*, p. 164, V. Smith mentions "a composition, nearly life-size, at Pathārî in the Bhopāl Agency, believed to represent the new-born Krishṇa lying by the side of his mother, who is watched by five attendants." The composition belongs to the Gupta Age. The Bhāgavatas did not borrow the idea of a mother-goddess from the Christians. Dr. Keith observes (J. R. A. S., 1907, p. 491) :— "Rhys Davids has brought evidence to show that there was in early days a widespread worship of Śrī comparable to the worship of Here or Athene in many Greek cities which with the rise of Christianity became transmuted into the adoration of the Madonna." The worship of Śrī is as old as the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa (ix. 4. 3) and the Bodhāyana Dharma Sūtra (ii. 5-24). We have representations of this goddess at Bharhut and other ancient Buddhist centres (Buddhist India, pp. 217-218) and also on the coins of Rājavula (Cunningham's Coins of Ancient India, p. 86).

As regards the pastoral associations of Krishṇa we have already pointed out that Vishṇu, the Vedic deity with whom Krishṇa is identified in the pre-Christian Taittirîya Āraṇyaka, is called in the Rig Veda Gopā which means "protector of cows" according to Macdonell and Keith (The Vedic Index, Vol. I, p. 238), and "herdsman" according to Hopkins (The Religions of India, p. 57). In the Rig Veda, I. 155.6 Vishṇu is called "ever young" Yuvā akumāraḥ. The epithets Gopā and Yuvā akumāraḥ of the Vedic Vishṇu might have been suggestive of the Paurāṇic legend of the youthful herdsman of Vrindābana,

just as the three strides of the same god suggested the legend of the Dwarf Avatāra.

Mr. Jayaswāl points out (Ind. Ant., 1918, p. 84) that before the Baudhāyana Dharma Sūtras Dāmodara and Govinda were known deities. This disposes of the view that the Krishṇa worship in the child and pastoral form owes its origin to Christianity.

The enmity between Kaṁsa and Krishṇa is referred to as familiar in Patañjali's Mahābhāshya (second century B.C.), and it is fair to conclude, as Macnicol says, that the legend of the attempt of Kaṁsa to kill Krishṇa in his childhood was also extant at that period.

The story of the passage across the river need not be traced to a Christian source. In the Vinaya Texts, Part II, p. 104, we have the story of Buddha's miraculous crossing of the Ganges.

The Harivaṁśa and the Purāṇas in which the stories about the child Krishṇa, referred to by Weber, Hopkins and others, occur, are really not so late works as these scholars would have us believe. The Harivaṁśa and all the eighteen Purāṇas are mentioned in the Mahābhārata and we know from the Khoh Inscription of Śarvanātha that the Great Epic was complete (that is, it contained one hundred thousand ślokas) in the sixth century A.D. We have independent proof of the celebrity of the Vāyu, Agni, Bhāgavata, Mārkaṇḍeya and Skanda Purāṇas in the seventh century A.D. (See V. Smith's Early History of India, 3rd edition, p. 22). The Harivaṁśa is mentioned as a famous work by Subandhu a writer of the seventh century A. D. (Weber's Ind. Lit., p. 119). A Bhavishyat Purāṇa is mentioned in the Dharma Sūtra of Āpastamba (Bühler's Introduction, p. xxviii).

There is reason to believe that the Vāyu, Brahmāṇḍa and the Vishṇu Purāṇas were compiled during the reign

of Chandragupta I, the founder of the Gupta dynasty, who ruled from 320 A.D. to about 335 A.D. "It seems to be to his reign that the verses in the Purāṇas defining the Gupta dominions refer." (Allan's Catalogue of the coins of the Gupta dynasties, p. xix). Mr. Pargiter, in his valuable work, the *Dynasties of the Kali Age*, adduces good grounds for placing the Matsya Purāṇa in the third century A. D. Some of the Christian Scriptures from which the Purāṇas are alleged to have borrowed the stories about the child Krishṇa are not much older. (Telang's Introductory Essay to the Bhagavadgītā, pp. xxiv, lxii, lxiii, n.). In J. R. A. S., 1908, p. 533, Jackson refers to the discovery at Mandor in Mārwār of sculptures of certain exploits of the child Krishṇa which cannot be dated later than the Christian era (See Arch. Survey Report, W. India, 1906-7, p. 33, para. 24).

We now come to the theory of Sir R. G. Bhandarkar. We learn from the Periplus of the Erythraean Sea that the Ābhiras were already settled in Western India ("Abiria"), in the first century A. D. They are also mentioned by Patañjali (Ind. Ant., 1918, p. 36). How could they bring with them traditions of the birth of Christ in a stable, of the massacre of the innocents and so on? Mr. V. Kanakasabhai, in his *Tamils Eighteen Hundred Years Ago*, p. 57, says that the Ayar (Ābhiras) had a tradition that they came into the Tamil land, along with the founder of the Pāṇḍyan family, *i.e.*, several centuries before Christ. Their name Ayar is derived from the Dravidian "Ā" meaning a cow.

Referring to Macnicol's conjecture that Nestorian Missions may have brought stories of the child Christ about the middle of the seventh century A. D., Dr. Keith observes that it is not true that Nestorian Missionaries entered the north of India in 639 A.D. (J.R.A.S., 1915,

pp. 839-840). This error is borrowed from Garbe and ultimately from Sir G. Grierson, but for giving it wide currency the latter has already made complete amends by his correction of Takakusu on whom the ultimate responsibility for the mistake rests.

Weber and his followers do not seek to present Krishṇaism as a distorted form of Christianity. They do not mean to assert that in Krishṇa India ever paid divine honours to Jesus. The Hindu god, in their opinion, had only arrogated to himself a certain number of Christian endowments. But Dr. Lorinser, in his Bhagavadgītā, goes further than this. He arrives at the singular conclusion that the author of the Hindu poem knew and used the Gospels and the Christian Fathers. His arguments seem to be as follows (See Indian Antiquary, Vol. II, 283 et seq.) :—

Śaṅkarāchārya lived in the eighth century A. D.; from that it is to be inferred that the Gītā was composed some five centuries earlier, *i. e.*, in the third century A. D.; at that time there were Christian communities in India; and there was also an Indian translation of the New Testament of which we have positive proof in the writings of St. Chrysostom. "In this way," Dr. Lorinser goes on to observe, "the possibility that the composer of the Bhagavadgītā may have been acquainted not merely with the general teaching of Christianity, but also with the very writings of the New Testament, might be shown in a very natural way, without the necessity of having recourse to rash hypothesis." The Doctor finds in the Gītā passages, and these not single and obscure, but numerous and clear, which present a surprising similarity to passages in the New Testament, and concludes that the composer was acquainted with the writings of the New Testament and used them as he thought fit. He places side by side the

most important of these passages in the Gītā, and the corresponding texts of the New Testament.

Dr. Lorinser further observes that the ideas Śraddhā and Bhakti are not originally Indian, but that they have been taken over from Christianity. In his opinion the incarnation of Vishṇu as Krishṇa—the only one represented as a truly human incarnation of the person of the god—is an imitation of the Christian dogma regarding the person of Christ.

Let us examine the arguments of Dr. Lorinser. It is not difficult to prove that the Gītā is much older than the third century A. D. While discussing the age of the Mahābhārata, Hopkins observes (The Great Epic of India, p. 387)—" We may say with comparative certainty that, with the exception of the parts latest added, the introduction to the first book and the last book, even the pseudo-epic was completed as early as 200 A.D." By pseudo-epic Hopkins means the didactic books, the Śānti and the Anuśāsana Parvas (The G. E. I., p. 381). As the Bhagavadgītā is referred to in the Śāntiparva it must be assigned to a period considerably anterior to the second century A. D. Hopkins says explicitly (p. 205) that the Gītā is "unquestionably one of the older poems in the epic." He further observes (p. 402) that "the Gītā and the Gambling scene are, as wholes, metrically and stylistically more antique than are the Anugītā and the extravaganzas in the battle-books." We have already pointed out that the Gītā must have existed in the third century B.C. because the contemporaneous Sūtras of Bādarāyaṇa were known to Āpastamba who cannot be placed later than that century.

Regarding the coincidences between passages in the Gīta and in the New Testament, Dr. Macnicol says (Indian Theism, p. 276) that a careful examination of the parallels

that have been traced shows the resemblances to be in many cases purely verbal and unreal, while others can be paralleled from Upanishads which are certainly pre-Christian . When Krishṇa says "of creations I am the beginning and the end.........of letters I am the Syllable A" (Gītā, x. 20-33) the likeness to the words in Revelation (i. 8), "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, which is, and which was, and which is to come," is no doubt striking, but Krishṇa is only repeating what is found in the Upanishads, "Brahma is the A" (Hopkins, The Religions of India, p. 226). "Krishṇa's identification of himself with everything in the Universe is in full agreement with the claims for Brahman in the Upanishads, and that among the lists of those things, that he is there, should be found some of the names such as the truth, the light, the way, which are applied to Christ, and especially to Christ in His aspect as the Eternal Word, is not surprising and cannot be said to prove indebtedness." (Indian Theism, p. 276). Referring to the striking similarity between the declaration of the Gītā, ix. 29, "They who devoutly worship me are in me, and I in them," and John, vi, 56, "He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood dwelleth in me, and I in him," Dr. Muir observes (Ind. Ant., 1875, pp. 79-80) that "the condition of oneness with the speaker is different in each case ; and that it is that oneness with him only that is common to the two texts." In the Rig Veda some passages occur which in part convey the same or a similar idea. Thus in ii, 11. 12, it is said : "O Indra, we sages have been in thee" ; and in x. 142.1, "This worshipper, O Agni, hath been in thee : O Son of strength, he has no other kinship ;" in viii. 92.32, the worshippers say to Indra, "thou art ours, and we thine—*tvamasmākaṁ tava smasi*."

Let us take a few more parallel passages.

" He is far from darkness," *Sarvasyadhātāramachintya-rūpam Ādityavarṇaṁ tamasaḥ parastāt* (Gītā, viii. 9).

" Light of lights, far from darkness is his name." *jyotishāmapi tajjyoti stamasaḥ paramuchyate.* (Gītā, xiii. 18).

"God is light, and in him is no darkness at all" (I John, i. 5).

The words here translated " far from darkness" (*tamasah parastāt*) are not peculiar to the Gītā, but occur also in the Muṇḍaka Upanishad II. ii. 6. The word *tamasaspari* meaning "above, or beyond the darkness" occur also in the Rig Veda, 1.50.10. " Gazing towards the upper light beyond the darkness, we have ascended to the highest luminary, Sūrya, a God among the gods." Curiously enough this was one of the verses which Krishṇa learnt from Ghora Āṅgirasa (Chh., iii. 17.7). In the Gītā the words *tamasah parastāt* are immediately preceded by '*āditya-varṇam*' "the sun coloured." The Gītākāra had thus no need to borrow anything from the Bible. Dr. Muir observes " most of the verses cited from that poem (the Gītā) by Dr. Lorinser as parallel to texts in the Bible appear to me either to exhibit no very close resemblance to the latter, or to be such as might naturally have occurred to the Indian writer, and to offer therefore only an accidental similarity" (Ind. Ant., 1875, p. 81).

Dr. Lorinser finds that it is the Gospel of John in particular from which the composer of the Gītā has taken the most important phrases. We have pointed out that the Gītā existed long before the second century A. D., while the Gospel of John, according to Dr. Strauss, ' was not known until after the middle of the second century A. D.' (Telang's Introductory Essay, p. lxii). Strauss adds that the Fourth Gospel " bears every indication of having

arisen upon a foreign soil, and under the influence of a philosophy of the time unknown to the original circle in which Jesus lived."

We now come to the doctrines of Śraddhā, Bhakti and Avatāra. Telang observes (Introductory Essay to the Bhagavad-Gītā, pp. lxxxi-lxxxii): "In the comment on Pāṇini ii. 2.34. occur the following examples : *Śraddhāmedhe* and *Śraddhātapaso*. Now when we observe, that these examples are given to illustrate the rule that in copulative compounds the more important term stands before the less important, it becomes clear that Śraddhā was in the time of Patañjali regarded as a more important element in a religious life than even *medhā* and *tapas*. The Chhāndogya Upanishad is one of the oldest of the Upanishads, and in it we have the passage *yadeva vidyayā karoti Śraddhayā upanishadā tadeva vīryavattaṁ bhavati*, where we see the value ascribed to Śraddhā. [Chh. Up., i. 1.10. *cf.* also Chhāndogya, vii. 19—*Śraddhāṁ Bhagavo vijijñāsa iti.*]

It has already been shown that the ideas that Bhakti connotes are found in the Varuṇa hymns of the Rig Veda, and that the word in its religious application is pre-Christian (*cf.* Pāṇini, iv. 3.95 ; iv. 3.98).

The incarnation of Vishṇu as Krishṇa is not a post-Christian innovation. It is clearly implied in the Taittirīya Āraṇyaka (x. 1.6) which is certainly a pre-Christian work (J.R.A.S., 1915, p. 840). The book is referred to by Āpastamba. The germ of the theory of Avatāra or Incarnation already appears in the Brāhmaṇa literature. In the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa (7.5.1.5 ; 14.1.2.11) we find the statement that "having assumed the form of a tortoise Prajāpati created offspring" : and again that "in the form of a boar he raised the earth from the bottom of the ocean." (See Vedic Mythology, p. 41 et seq.). The Brāhmaṇas also state that Vishṇu assumed the form of a dwarf in order by

artifice to recover the earth for the gods from the Asuras by taking his three strides.

Barth says (The Religions of India, p. 222): "The theory of the Avatāras appears to us to be a purely Indian, one.......we have indicated elsewhere the analogy that exists between it and the theory of the successive apparitions of Buddha, and this last appears to have been conceived prior to our era, since we find it figuring in the bas-reliefs of Barahat."

We find what is difficult to distinguish from the theory of Avatāra in the Saddharmapuṇḍarīka (xv. 7-9, Kern's translation, p. 308), a Buddhist work which was probably composed before any Christian missionaries came to India since it obtained great celebrity in the opening centuries of the Christian era, and was translated into Chinese in the third century A.D. The story of St. Thomas' visit to India in the first century A.D. is "pure mythology" according to V. Smith (E. H. I, p. 233). The existence of the Christian Church of South India may be traced back only to the third century, but not earlier (E. H. I, p. 235).

LECTURE IV

BHĀGAVATISM IN THE SCYTHIAN, GUPTA AND POST-GUPTA PERIODS

The history of the Bhāgavata religion from the first to the third century A.D. is, at present, in a state of utmost confusion and darkness. There are some Buddhist works of the period, *e.g.*, the Buddha-charita, and the Awakening of Faith of Aśvaghosha, which show some acquaintance with Bhāgavatism, but they do not to any great extent illumine the darkness. The difficulty of finding any Brāhmaṇical works, which may with certainty be referred to this period, excludes them from the domain of the historian.

Krishṇa is mentioned only in three famous inscriptions of the period, namely, the Mathurā Inscription of the time of the Mahākshatrapa Śoḍāsa discovered by Prof. R. P. Chanda (Memoirs of the Archæological Survey of India, No. 5), the Nāsik Buddhist Cave Inscription of the time of Rājaṉ Vāsiṭhiputa Siri-Pulumāyi (Lüders, Inscription No. 1123) and the China Stone Inscription of the time of Rājan Gotamiputa Sirī-Yaña Sātakaṇi (Lüders, Inscription No. 1340). The Mathurā Inscription, discovered by Prof. Ramāprasād Chanda, records the erection of a toraṇa, vedikā and chatuḥśāla at the mahāsthāna of Vāsudeva, in the reign of the Mahākshatrapa Śoḍāsa. In the Nāsik inscription the name of Krishṇa (Keśava) occurs in the following passage: *Ekadhanudharasa ekasurasa ekabamhaṇasa Rāma-Keśav Ārjuna Bhīmasenatulaparakamasa* "the unique archer, the unique hero, the unique Brāhmaṇa, in prowess equal to Rāma, Keśava, Arjuna and Bhīma-

sena." (Epigraphia Indica, Vol. VIII, p. 60.) This inscription comes from the same province of India to which the Nānāghāṭa record belongs. But it is worthy of note that the characteristic Bhāgavata names Saṅkarshaṇa and Vāsudeva are not mentioned, and are substituted by Rāma and Keśava ; and the two are not called Bhagavat, but only men of prowess. This is exactly what we might expect from a record in a Buddhist cave. It will be remembered that in the Buddhist Ghata Jātaka also Vāsudeva and Baladeva figure only as princes and warriors. The China Inscription was published by Bühler as early as 1889 (Ep. Ind., Vol. I, p. 95 f.). Mr. N. G. Majumdar is the first to point out that it opens with an invocation of Bhagavat Vāsudeva.

Mathurā, the birth-place of Bhāgavatism, where the religion was found flourishing by Megasthenes, had ceased to be the stronghold of the faith during the Śaka-Kushān Period. Only one Bhāgavata inscription has yet been discovered at the place which can be referred with certainty to the period of Scythian rule. The evidence of epigraphy points to the predominance of the Jaina faith, although Buddhism and Serpent worship also appear to have flourished. No less than eighty-seven inscriptions belong to the Jaina faith. The number of Buddhist inscriptions is about fifty-six. The following inscriptions belong to Serpent worship :—

(1) Lüders, Inscription No. 63 which records the dedication of a pillar by Devila, the servant or priest at the temple of Dadhikarṇa.

(2) Lüders, Inscription No. 85 which records the dedication of a stone slab in the temple of the divine lord of serpents (bhagavat nāgendra) Dadhikarṇa by the sons of the actors of Mathurā, who are praised as the Chāndaka brothers, chief among whom was Nandibala.

(3) Lüders, Inscription No. 52*a*—The Mathurā Nāga Statuette Inscription.

The evidence of serpent worship in Mathurā is important in view of the story of Kāliya nāga, and his suppression by Krishṇa recorded in the Purāṇas compiled during the Gupta Period.

The paucity of Bhāgavata inscriptions at Mathurā probably indicates that Bhāgavatism did not find much favour at the royal court. The Śaka and Kushān sovereigns who reigned from the first century B. C. to the third century A. D. were usually Śivites or Buddhists and were, with a few exceptions, not well disposed towards the religion of Vāsudeva. This anti-Bhāgavata attitude was probably one of the causes which brought the foreign kings into conflict with Vaishṇava monarchs like Chandra of the Meharaulî Inscription and the Chandra Guptas of the Gupta dynasty.

No inscription has yet been discovered which throws any light on the state of Bhāgavatism in Northern India during the period which elapsed from the time of Śoḍāsa to the Age of the Guptas. When the veil of darkness is lifted again in the Gupta Period we find the religion flourishing in the Panjāb, Rājputāna, Central and Western India and Magadha.

The Tuśām Rock Inscription, discovered in the Hissar District of the Panjāb, which may be assigned to the fourth century A. D. on Palæographical grounds, contains an adoration of Vishṇu, "the mighty bee on the water-lily which is the face of Jāmbavatī," and mentions two reservoirs intended for the use of the Bhagavat, which are the work of Somatrāta, the great-grandson of Āryya Sātvata-Yogāchāryya-Bhagavad-Bhakta Yaśastrāta.

In the Śuśuniā Inscription of Chandravarman that monarch is described as the ruler of Pushkaraṇa in

Rājputāna, and as a servant of Chakrasvāmin (Krishṇa-Vishṇu). Mahāmahopādhyāya Haraprasād Śāstrī believes that this king is identical with the mighty sovereign Chandra of the Meharaulî Iron Pillar Inscription "who in battle in the Vaṅga countries turned back with his breast the enemies who uniting together came against him, and by whom having crossed in warfare the seven mouths of the Indus the Vāhlikas were conquered." King Chandra set up a lofty standard of Bhagavat Vishṇu on the hill called Vishṇupada which is probably identical with that part of the Delhi Ridge on which the column stands.

An inscription of the time of Naravarman, the younger brother of Chandravarman, has been recently discovered at Mandasor. (Indian Antiquary, 1913, 'Epigraphic notes and questions' by Professor D. R. Bhandarkar). The object of the record seems to be something connected with Vāsudeva. The Gaṅgdhāra Inscription of the time of Viśvavarman, the son of Naravarman, records the erection of a temple of Vishṇu by Mayūrākshaka, who was one of the king's ministers. The coins of the Traikūṭaka King Dahrasena, the son of Indradatta, describe him as Paramavaishṇava. From a copper-plate found at Pardi, south of Surat, we learn that Dahrasena flourished about A. D. 456 (J. R. A. S., 1905, pp. 801-804).

The great Gupta sovereigns of Magadha describe themselves as "paramabhāgavatas," and were unquestionably great champions of the religion of Vāsudeva. With the rise of their power Bhāgavatism, which was now synonymous with Vaishṇavism, naturally came to the fore front and spread to the remotest corners of India. The general prevalence of the religion throughout the Gupta Empire is attested by numerous inscriptions and sculptures. The Udayagiri Cave Inscription of the year 82 of the Gupta Era records the dedication of two images, one of

Vishṇu, the other of a twelve-armed goddess who must be some form of Lakshmī, by a mahārāja of the Sanakānika family; the last component—'dhala' of his name alone is legible, but he is described as the son of Mahārāja Vishṇudāsa, and the grandson of the Mahārāja Chhagalaga; he describes himself as Śrī Chandraguptapādānudhyāta, so that he must have been a feudatory of Chandra Gupta II Vikramāditya. The name of the father of—'dhala,' Vishṇudāsa, indicates that he, too, was a Bhāgavata or Vaishṇava. The Bhitarī Pillar Inscription of Skanda Gupta records the installation of an image of Śārṅgin and the allotment to it of a village by the emperor in memory of his father Kumāra Gupta I, and to increase his merit. The inscription mentions Skanda Gupta's struggles with the Pushyamitras. Kumāra Gupta seems to have died before the success of his son's arms had been assured and the ruined fortunes of the family re-established; it was therefore to his mother that the victorious prince returned to announce his victory, "just as Krishṇa, when he had slain his enemies, betook himself to (his mother) Devakī." The Junāgaḍh Inscription of the same reign contains an adoration of Vishṇu "the perpetual abode of Lakshmī, whose dwelling is the water-lily; the conqueror of distress; the completely victorious one, who, for the sake of the happiness of the lord of gods, seized back from Bali the goddess of wealth and splendour, who is admitted to be worthy of enjoyment and who had been kept away from him for a long time." The inscription records the erection of a temple of Chakrabhrit (Krishṇa) by Chakrapālita who was the son of a governor of Skanda Gupta, and was a devoted worshipper of Govinda. Another inscription of the time of Skanda Gupta, *viz.*, the Gaḍhwā Inscription of 467-68 A. D., records the installation of an image of Anantasvāmin (Vishṇu)

and a grant of some land at a village belonging to the same god under the name of Chitrakūṭasvāmin. The Eraṇ Stone Pillar Inscription of the time of Budha Gupta records the erection of a dhajastambha or flagstaff of Janārdana by the Mahārāja Mātrivishṇu. Another Eraṇ inscription executed in the reign of the Hun King Toramāṇa contains an adoration of the Boar Incarnation and records the erection of a stone temple of "Nārāyaṇa who has the form of a boar," by Dhanyavishṇu, the younger brother of Mātrivishṇu.

After the disintegration of the Empire of the Guptas the Bhāgavata or Vaishṇava religion flourished in the dominions of many of their former feudatories, especially in Central India. The Khoh Copper-plate Inscription of the Parivrājaka Mahārāja Saṁkshoba (209 G. S.=529 A. D.) contains an invocation of Vāsudeva, and records the gift of a village for the purpose of observing the bali, charu and sattra at the temple which the king has caused to be built for the goddess Pishṭapurī (a form of Lakshmī). The Khoh Copper-plate Inscription of Jayanātha records the gift of a village for the purpose or a temple of Vishṇu. Two inscriptions of the same place but executed in the reign of Sarvanātha record the gift of several villages for the purpose of the worship of the goddess Pishṭapurikā.

We learn from the Māliyā Copper-plate Inscription of Dharasena II that Dhruvasena I, King of Valabhī, was a Bhāgavata or Vaishṇava. The Sārnāth Stone Inscription of Prakatāditya records the building of a temple to Muradvish (Vishṇu-Krishṇa). A temple of Deogarh, in the Lalitpur Subdivision of the Jhānsi district (in the United Provinces) is adorned with sculptures which, according to V. Smith, may date from the first half of the sixth century A. D. The subject of one

of these is Vishṇu as the Eternal, reclining on the serpent Ananta with the other gods watching from above. A composition nearly life-size, at Patharî in the Bhopāl Agency, believed to represent the new born Krishṇa lying by the side of his mother, who is watched by five attendants is considered by some to be the finest and largest piece of Indian sculpture (see V. Smith's History of Fine Art in India and Ceylon, p. 164). The style, says Smith, is much the same as that of the Deogarh panels, and the group must be of nearly the same age.

We shall now try to find out the most salient features of "Guptan Vaishṇavism." It is clear from the Tuśām Inscription that the Sātvatas or the Bhāgavatas had now definitely accepted the identification of their Krishṇa with Vishṇu. Vishṇu's epithet "The mighty bee on the water-lily which is the face of Jāmbavatī" certainly refers to Krishṇa who is in the Purāṇas and the Mahā-Ummagga Jātaka (The Jātaka, edited by Cowell, Vol. VI, pp. 216-217) the husband of Jāmbavatī or Jambāvati. But though Krishṇa and Vishṇu were regarded as identical, the latter name is now the more usual designation of the Supreme God of the Sātvatas or the Bhāgavatas. Vishṇu was now the Supreme Deity, Krishṇa was merely his most perfect Incarnation. In other words Bhāgavatism had now lost itself in Vishṇuism.

Along with Krishṇa there appear other beings who are also regarded as incarnations of Vishṇu-Nārāyaṇa. The worship of the incarnations is a notable feature of the Vaishṇavism of the Gupta period. The Boar Incarnation is expressly referred to in the Eraṇ Inscription of the time of Toramāṇa. The Dwarf Incarnation is clearly implied in the statement of the Junāgaḍh Inscription "who, for the sake of the happiness of the lord of the gods, seized back from Bali the goddess of wealth and splendour."

The Rāma Avatāra is not referred to in any of the Gupta inscriptions, but is mentioned by Kālidāsa (Raghuvaṁśa, xiii. 1, Rāmābhidhāno Hari) who probably belonged to the Gupta Age. The Rāma cult however was still in its infancy. There is no clear evidence of the existence of a Ramaite sect before the age of Rāmānanda. The germs of the Dwarf, the Boar, the Fish and the Tortoise Avatāras are to be found in the Śatapatha and a few other Brāhmaṇas, but not as yet connected with Vishṇu (the Dwarf alone excepted). Nrisiṁha appears in the Taittirīya Āraṇyaka. In the Nārāyaṇîya (Mbh., xii. 349.37), only the Boar, the Dwarf, the Man Lion and Man (Vāsudeva) appear as avatāras. In a second list (op. cit. 339.77-90) two more, Rāma Bhārgava and Rāma Dāśarathī, are added. In a third list (op. cit. 339. 104) Haṁsa, Kūrma, Matsya, and Kalki are added, while in the Matsya Purāṇa (47. 247) and the Bhāgavata Purāṇa (1.3.24) Buddha appears in the list of the Avatāras. The doctrine of the Avatāras thus underwent at least four stages of development.

With the worship of the Avatāras may be contrasted the total absence of any reference to the Vyūhas Saṅkarshaṇa, Pradyumna and Aniruddha in the inscriptions of the Gupta Age. The Vyūhas as well as the ten Avatāras are met with in the Nārāyaṇīya. The Mahābhāshya of Patañjali and the Ghasundī and Nānāghāṭ Inscriptions show that the cult of the Vyūhas in some shape must have prevailed in the second and first centuries B.C. The disappearance of the worship of the Vyūhas excepting Vāsudeva was perhaps one of the first fruits of the growing popularity of the Avatāras. The ousting of the Vyūhas by the Avatāras was one of the characteristic signs of the transformation of Bhāgavatism into Vishṇuism.

Another important feature of the Vaishṇavism of the Gupta period was the worship of Lakshmī. Under the

name of Sirimā Devatā Lakshmī appears to have been worshipped by the Brahmanical Hindus and Buddhists alike before the Christian eia. We have representations, of a very early date, of this goddess on the Bharahat Tope, and on certain silver coins of the Mahākshatrapa Rājuvula of Mathurā. (Rhys Davids, Buddhist India, pp. 216-219, and Cunningham, Coins of Ancient India, p. 86.) She had only a minor place in the early Vishṇuite pantheon (*cf.* Bodhāyana Dharmasūtra, ii. 5.24). But, as Sister Niveditā has pointed out (Footfalls of Indian History, p. 213), "a great formative movement took place in the history of Vaishṇavism when India was united under the Guptas." The "enthronement of Lakshmī beside Nārāyaṇa as the centre of Vaishṇava worship" (op. cit. p. 206) is not an isolated fact. It is paralleled by the prominent position held by the Devīs or royal consorts in the inscriptions and on the coins of the Gupta Emperors. There is reason to believe that there was "a strong movement for the assertion of the rights of woman" (op. cit. p. 206), in the Gupta period. The influence of the Sāṅkhya doctrine of Purusha and Prakriti on the neo-Vaishṇavism may also be detected in the Lakshmī-Nārāyaṇa cult. The numismatic evidence seems to point to the fact that the worship of Pallas and other Greek goddesses had something to do with the wide diffusion of the cult of Śrī. On Rājuvula's coin mentioned above Lakshmī sometimes takes the place of Pallas on the reverse.

In a previous lecture I have adduced grounds for believing that the principal Purāṇas were composed or compiled during the Gupta Age. But it is not safe to depend on them in writing the history of ancient Vaishṇavism. The Purāṇas have been added to from time to time and the texts have undergone such corruptions that no one can be positively certain that a particular chapter

was not interpolated in comparatively recent times. *E.g.*, the Vayu Purāṇa known to the Mahābhārata (iii. 191.16. *Vāyuproktamanusmritya Purāṇam Rishi saṁstutam*) was different from our present text. The passages from the Purāṇa quoted in the epic do not agree with the corresponding passages of the extant work. What is true of the Vāyu is also true of the Matsya, Vishṇu, Bhāgavata and Brahma-Vaivartta Purāṇas. The great Bengali writer Bankimchandra shows in his Krishṇa-Charitra that the contents of the extant Brahma-Vaivartta Purāṇa do not agree with the contents of the work given in the Matsya. As the extant Purāṇa texts are unreliable I have generally abstained from using them in the present historic sketch and have depended mainly on the sure guidance of epigraphy.

With the fall of the Guptas Bhāgavatism lost its preeminence in Northern India. The most powerful sovereigns of the next period, *e.g.*, Mihiragula, Yaśodharman and Harsha, were adherents of non-Bhāgavata creeds. But there is reason to believe that though hurled from its eminent position, it was far from being extinct in Northern India. In the Harsha-charita of Bāṇabhatta (seventh century A.D.) King Harsha is represented as meeting not only Buddhists and Jainas but also Bhāgavatas. Bāṇa mentions not only the Bhāgavatas but also the Pañcharātras. The word Pañcharātra was sometimes used as a synonym of Bhāgavata ; more often it designated an important branch of the Bhāgavata sect (Ind. Ant., 1908, p. 258).

The Bhāgavatas were an influential sect in the early part of the ninth century A. D. Śaṅkarāchārya in a well-known passage of his commentary on the Brahmasūtras (II. ii, 42-45) combats the Bhāgavata doctrine (which he calls Pañcharātra) and asserts its incompleteness and

unorthodoxy. The passage seems to intimate that the promulgator of the Pañcharātra system was Śāṇḍilya, who was dissatisfied with the Vedas, not finding in them prompt and sufficient way of supreme excellence (Para-Sreyas) and final beatitude ; and therefore he had recourse to this Śāstra. Śāṇḍilya was probably one of the first among those who systematised the doctrines of the Vāsudevakas. If we regard him as identical with Udara Sāṇḍilya of the Vedic texts, he is tenth in the apostolic succession from Indrota (Vaṁśa Brāhmaṇa, 2), the priest of Janamejaya, the great-grandson of Krishṇa's sister Subhadrā.

Though the Bhāgavata religion still flourished in the north, its stronghold was now not the valley of the Ganges or Central India, but the Tamil Country. There the faith flourished under the strong impetus given by the Ālwārs "who by their Tamil songs inculcated Bhakti and Krishṇa-worship mainly." Bhāgavatism had penetrated into the Deccan at least as early as the first century B. C. (*cf.* the Nānāghāṭ Inscription). The China inscription of the time of Yajñaśrī Śātakarṇi shows that the faith flourished in the Krishṇā District in the second century A.D. The significant name "Vishṇu gopa" of Kāñchī found in the Allahabad Praśasti of Samudra Gupta probably indicates that the Krishṇa cult had found its way to the extreme south before the middle of the fourth century A.D. Nay, we have a more direct evidence of the existence of Krishṇa-Baladeva worship in the Tamil country in the early centuries of the Christian era. The Chilappathikaram and the other ancient Tamil poems refer to temples dedicated to Krishṇa and his brother at Madurā, Kāviripaddinam and other cities. (Kanakasabhai's "The Tamils Eighteen Hundred Years Ago," pp. 13, 26). The poet Kari-kannan of Kāviripaddinam described the two Kings Karikal and Velli-ampala-thu-Thunjia-Peru-Valuthi

as "majestic like the two gods, one of whom, fair in complexion, bears the flag of the Palmyra (Baladeva) and the other of dark hue, whose weapon is a wheel." (Kanakasabhai's "The Tamils Eighteen Hundred Years Ago," pp. 68-69.)

The Vaishṇava tradition of Southern India names twelve Ālwārs, namely :—

1. Poygai Ālwār.
2. Bhūtattar Ālwār.
3. Pey Ālwār.
4. Tirumaliśai Ālwār.
5. Namm-Ālwār or Saint Satagopa.
6. Madhurakavi Ālwār.
7. Kulaśekhara Ālwār.
8. Periy-Ālwār.
9. Āṇḍāl.
10. Toṇḍaraḍippoḍi Ālwār.
11. Tiruppāṇ Ālwār.
12. Tirumaṅgai Ālwār.

The three earliest Ālwārs were mythical in their origin and are said to have met at the modern Tirukkoilur, where they had a vision of God and poured forth their joy at the sight in Tamil verses of a hundred each. These Ālwārs speak of Nārāyaṇa as the highest God, allude frequently to the early Avatāras of Vishṇu, especially the Trivikrama, and are eloquent in their admiration of the Krishṇa Avatāra. They presuppose the chief Purāṇas and adore images of the more ancient shrines of South India, like those at Śrîraṅgam, Tirupati, Alagarkoil, etc. They speak with respect of the Vedic lore but teach the worship of the Deity by recitations of His names, services at the temples, and contemplation of His personal forms. Tirumaliśai Ālwār was the next in order of time and he composed about two hundred stanzas.

The fifth Ālwār Saint Satagopa or Namm-Ālwār stands first among the Ālwārs in order of importance. It is his work that has the distinctive appellation *Tiruvoymoli*, "the word of the mouth." He was a native of the city of Kurukai near modern Tinnevelly on the Tāmraparṇī in the kingdom of the Pāṇḍyas, and composed over a thousand stanzas in classical Tamil. Madhurakavi was a worshipper of his Guru exclusively. Kulaśekhar Ālwār was a ruler of ancient Travancore. Periy-Ālwār or Vishṇuchitta, was a Pariah devotee and a composer of extensive songs. Āṇḍal was a lady, the daughter of Vishṇuchitta, who may rightly be called the "Mîrā Bāi" of the South. Regarding the next Ālwār little is known. The eleventh, Tiruppāṇ Ālwār, composed but ten stanzas.

The last of the Ālwārs is Tirumaṅgai who is the author of the largest number (1,361) of the four thousand verses of the Vaishṇava Prabandham. Tirumaṅgai belonged to the Kallar caste and was born at Kurugur in the Tanjore district. He settled in Śrīraṅgam and rebuilt some parts of the great shrine, the funds for which he had to find by demolishing the great Buddhist shrine at Negapatam. He provided for the recital of Namm-Ālwār's Tiruvoymoli annually at Śrīraṅgam. The date of this Ālwār is a subject on which opinion is divided. Bishop Caldwell held that he was a disciple of Rāmānuja, while Gopīnāth Rāo is willing to believe that he was a contemporary, if not actually a disciple of Yamunāchāryya Ālavandār, Rāmānuja's great-grandfather and predecessor in the apostolic succession of Vaishṇavism who lived about 1000 A.D. (See Ind. Ant., 1906, p. 230). It is however clear from the centum known as the Rāmānujanūrrandhādhi, a work composed during the life time of Rāmānujāchāryya by Amudan, a convert and pupil

of one of the great Āchāryya's own disciples, that Rāmānuja lived long after Tirumangai, and had read and derived much wisdom from the works of that Ālwār. (S. Krishṇaswāmi Aiyangar, Ancient India, p. 407). That the last Ālwār was not a disciple, or contemporary of Yamunāchāryya is proved by a stanza in praise of his work by Tirukkoṭṭiyūr Nambi, a teacher of Rāmānuja and therefore a contemporary of Yamunā. The eulogium goes to show that Tirumaṅgai's works had been regularly studied and handed down from preceptor to disciple for some time at least. A decad of Tirumaṅgai in praise of the Parameśvara Vinnagara at Kāñchī gives in great detail the achievements of a Pallava ruler whom Dr. Hultzsch considers to be identical with Parmeśvara Varman II, from the name of the shrine. This, says Krishṇaswāmî Aiyaṅgar (Ind. Ant., 1906, p. 231), is not a necessary inference, as any other Pallava paramount sovereign might have had the title Pallava Parmeśvara. The details given in the decad do not find support from what is known of Parmeśvara Varman II. There is a story that Tirumaṅgai held a successful disputation with the Śaiva saint Tirujñāna Sambanda, a contemporary of the celebrated Pallava ruler Narasiṁha Varman I of Kāñchī who reigned from A.D. 625 to 645. The date of the Śaiva saint has then to be allotted to the middle of the seventh century A.D. The date of his Vaishṇava contemporary must also fall either in the middle of the seventh century, or (if he was a younger contemporary) in the latter part of the same century and the beginning of the eighth.

The dates ascribed by the hagiologists to the earlier Ālwārs do not bear scrutiny. Since the last Ālwār lived in the seventh century A.D., it follows that the earliest saints must have lived long before this period, possibly in the opening years of the Christian era.

The Ālwārs were followed by another group of teachers called Āchāryyas who represented the intellectual side of Tamilian Vaishṇavism as the Ālwārs did the emotional side. The first of the Āchāryyas was Nāthamuni or Raṅganāthāchāryya who lived in the town of Śrīraṅgam near Trichinopoly during the latter half of the ninth, and the beginning of the tenth century A.D. He was a native of Vîranārāyaṇapura, the modern Mannargudi, and was probably a descendant of the early Vaishṇava immigrants from the North who carried the Bhāgavata cult to the Tamil country.

Nāthamuni was a passionate lover of the songs of the Ālwārs, especially of Satagopa. He is said to have recovered the whole of Satagopa's works and to have arranged them and the extant works of the other Ālwārs into four collections of almost a thousand stanzas each. He also composed a Sanskrit work, the *Nyāyatatva* extracts from which are given in the Nyāyasidhañjana of Śrî Vedānta Deśika, a famous Vaishṇava writer of the fourteenth century A.D. The Nyāyatatva, in the opinion of T. Rājagopālachāriar was an elaborate treatise covering the whole field of philosophy from the point of view of the Viśishṭādvaita school. The doctrine peculiar to the school of which Nāthamuni was the founder, and Rāmānuja the great exponent, is the doctrine of *Prapatti* or surrender to God in absolute renunciation and faith. This doctrine is practically founded on the Pañcharātra Tantras, and is a cardinal doctrine of the Vaishṇava. It is said to have been accepted and brought into practice by Nammālwār, and by Nāthamuni after him. It was elaborated by Rāmānuja's successors. In his latter days Nāthamuni made a pilgrimage to the most sacred spots in the Vaishṇava Holy Land, including Mathurā, the Bethlehem of Bhāgavatism. It was in commemoration of this visit, with his son and daughter-in-law, to the banks of the Yamunā, that his

grandson born about A.D. 916 is said to have been named Yamunā.

The death of Nāthamuni took place in or about the year 920 A.D. He had infused fresh energy into the heart of Vaishṇavism, and the sect of Śrîvaishṇavas established by him was destined to have a chequered career in the annals of India.

The second Āchārya was Puṇḍarîkāksha who is said to have been born about A.D. 826 at Tiruvallari, north of Śrîraṅgam. He received from his guru Nāthamuni the name of "Uyyakkondar" or Saviour of the New Dispensation.

Rāmamiśra was the next in the apostolic succession after Puṇḍarîkāksha. He does not appear to have been a man of strong personality like Nāthamuni, but he had the enthusiasm of his predecessors and holds an honourable place among the Vaishṇava apostles as the spiritual instructor of the great Yamunāchārya.

"Yamunāchārya" says T. Rājagopālachāriar "really laid the foundation for all the doctrines that go under Rāmānuja's name. Yamunā was born in the city of Vîranārāyaṇapura (the modern Mannargudi in the South Arcot District) in or about the year 916 A.D. He was the son of Īśvara Bhatta, and the grandson of Nāthamuni.

Yamunā first distinguished himself by vanquishing one Akki Alwan the Court Pundit of the reigning Chola king in a Śāstric disputation, and was hailed by the Chola queen as Ālavandār or the Victor. He was granted some lands by the king and lived a life of pleasure and luxury. The story goes that one day Rāmamiśra managed to gain an interview with him and persuaded him to visit the shrine of Śrîraṅgam to receive a valuable treasure which Nāthamuni had left for his grandson. When he reached the temple Yamunā was told that the treasure was the Deity

Himself. His eyes were now opened. He took up his residence at Śrîraṅgam and devoted himself to the task of expounding the doctrines of the Viśishtādvaita school which is "a somewhat modified and more methodical form of the ancient Bhāgavata, Pañcharātra, or Sāttvata religion."

The most important work of Yamunāchārya is the *Siddhitraya.* It contains three sections called the Ātma-Siddhi, the Īśvara Siddhi and the Samvid Siddhi, and is said to have for its object the demonstration of the real existence of the individual and Supreme souls, and the refutation of the doctrine of Avidyā. The Siddhitraya is quoted frequently by Rāmānuja.

Another important work of Yamunāchārya is the *Āgamaprāmāṇya* which maintains the orthodoxy of the Bhāgavata or Pañcharātra school against the attack of Saṅkarāchārya.

Yamunāchārya is also the author of the *Gîtārthasaṁgraha* which contains a summary of the teachings of the Gîtā. Following antecedent oral teaching he analysed the Divine Song as a consistent exposition of the doctrine of Bhakti supplemented by a description of the Karma and Jñāna Yogas as subordinate to the main theme.

Among other works of Yamunācharya may be mentioned the *Mahāpurushanirṇaya* and the *Stotraratna.* The Stotraratna has been commented upon by the great Vaishṇava writer Śrî Vedānta Deśika. "Its spirit of earnest piety" says Dr. Macnicol, "may be taken as indicative of the real religious value of this Vaishṇavism of the South."

Yamunāchārya's is thus one of the greatest names in the whole history of the Vaishṇavite development. It is said by some historians that, had there been no Philip, there would have been no Alexander, it may perhaps be said with greater precision tha. ad there been no Yamunāchārya

there would have been no Rāmānuja. The great prophet of mediæval Vaishṇavism has had to follow in the lines laid down by the great apostle who wrote the Siddhitraya and the Āgamapramāṇya.

Yamunāchārya is said to have died about 1040 A.D, having expressed a wish to see Rāmānuja established at Śrîraṅgam as his spiritual successor. The wish was duly carried out, and the school founded by Nāthamuni and raised to eminence by Yamunāchārya was strengthened by the advent of the man who may be looked upon as the second founder of Vaishṇavism, who "accomplished for Indian Theism, a work similar to that which the Greek Fathers did for Christianity in its Hellenic environment."

Having given a brief account of the lives of the Tamil Āchāryas to whom Rāmānuja owed so much, I proceed to note the special features of the religion which they professed and preached.

In the first place the new school, called the Śrī Vaishṇava or Viśishṭādvaita school, tacitly discarded the Karma-mārga of the Mîmāṁsā Philosophers according to which Salvation may be attained by the sole means of the faithful performance of Karmas or the periodical ceremonial rites enjoined by the Vedas and the Smritis. Śrī Vaishṇavism, like the school of Śaṅkara, was in one respect the expression of a natural reaction from the sacrifice-ridden Pūrva Mîmāṁsā schools of Prabhākara, Kumārila Bhaṭṭa Maṇḍana Miśra and others, which were in their turn the outcome of the disgust at the development of atheistic Buddhism (Rājagopāla Chariar, the Vaishnavite Reformers of India, p. 18). The Vaishṇavas, while abstaining from an open denunciation of the Karma Kāṇḍa, disapproved of all Karma which is done for worldly or transient results and considered that the best antidote to its evil effects is the renunciation of all attachment to the fruits thereof.

Śrī Vaishṇavism was also a protest against the system of Śaṅkara. The great Advaita philosopher laid unusual stress on Jñāna. Even among the most learned in Śaṅkara's school a tendency was seen to make religion more an affair of the head than of the heart. In a system of Absolute Monism there is hardly any room for Bhakti, in the popular sense, as a feeling of reverence for a being conceived as higher than the soul of the devotee. The Śrī Vaishṇavas attacked this system and explained the ancient Scriptures in a far more human spirit than Śaṅkara did. In refuting the absolute identity doctrine derived by Śaṅkara from the Upanishad text 'Ekamevādvitīyam,' Yamunāchārya says:—

Yathā Chola nripaḥ samrāḍadvitīyo'sti bhūtale
Iti tattulyanripati nivāraṇaparaṁ vachaḥ
Na tu tatputra tatbhritya kalatrādinivāraṇam

"To say that the Chola king, now reigning in this country, is all supreme and without a second, can only exclude the existence of another monarch equal (in power) to him; it cannot imply the denial of the existence of a wife, sons or servants of such a monarch."

The protest against Śaṅkara's system was carried further by Madhva, a Vaishṇava apostle of the thirteenth century A.D.

Śrī Vaishṇavism loosened the hold of its followers on the various minor gods who were propitiated with a view to the attainment of various worldy objects. Devotion to one Deity was the teaching of this school. The ordinary Indian is eclectic. The Śrī Vaishṇavite alone had something of the Hebrew spirit of exclusiveness. To the follower of Śaṅkara one Personal God was as good as another and both were simply of 'phenomenal importance.' But the Śrī Vaishṇavite like the Hebrew refused to recognise as objects of worship deities other than their own favourite.

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Another remarkable characteristic of Vaishṇavism was its solicitude for the lower classes. Unlike the more orthodox forms of Hinduism, it did not keep the Śūdras and the untouchables at a distance, but brought them into its fold and extended to them the privilege of knowing God and of attaining liberation. The agencies employed in effecting this were :—(1) the doctrine of *prapatti* or surrender to God, which was conceived as demanding no caste status or educational qualification, (2) the adoption for religious purposes of the works of the Ālwārs and making them the common property of all classes, Brāhmaṇas and non-Brāhmaṇas alike.

But although liberal in this respect the Śrī Vaishṇava Āchāryas firmly supported caste, eschewed all heresy, and upheld the Śāstras. The conservatism of the southern Vaishṇavas in social matters was productive of important consequences in later times. Rāmānanda, one of the apostolic successors of Rāmānuja insulted by his brethren for his social inferiority, travelled north, and established the famous sect which can boast of a Kavīra and a Tulasī Dās.

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